Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest, how safe do you feel in the security of your own home these days?

Let your voice be heard! Go to www.saipantribune.com to cast your vote.

INSIDE

Evacuation

Almost all of the 47,000 residents living on the slopes of a rumbling Mayon Volcano have moved to emergency shelters.

ASIA...Page 17

More Awards

Taylor Swift has been voted The Associated Press entertainer of the year.

LIFE & STYLE...Page 19

Bellas: Charitable institutions to divvy up $500K. **PAGE 2**

Dandan robbery victim was shot in the face. **PAGE 3**

NMC faculty loses confidence in Fernandez

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Fernandez

Majority of faculty members at the Northern Marianas College have lost their trust and confidence in the leadership of Dr. Carmen Fernandez and they made this plain with a "vote of no confidence" during a faculty assembly on Dec. 18.

An overwhelming 80 percent of faculty members that attended the assembly voted to adopt the "vote of no confidence."

Saipan Tribune learned that a total of 30 faculty members attended the meeting, during which 24 voted in favor of the "no confidence" vote. Three members voted against it, while three abstained.

The NMC faculty is currently chaired by Larry Lee, who will report and convey the faculty's

See NMC on Page 4

Legal action eyed to collect $26M in unpaid contributions from agencies

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Trustees of the NMI Retirement Fund have agreed to explore the possibility of suing independent agencies that continue to ignore the Fund's call to settle their unpaid employer contributions, totaling $26 million to date.

It was learned during a regular meeting yesterday that the uncollectible accounts are from eight independent agencies, a majority of which are taking no action to resolve the problem with the Fund.

Fund administrator Mark Aguon disclosed that the $26

See LEGAL on Page 4

From $3.65M to $3.88M, pork barrel bill defeated then passed

Vote considered in less than 15 minutes

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

From left, Rep. Ray N. Yumul (R-Saipan), Rep. Justo Quitugua (D-Saipan), and Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan) confer on an appropriations bill during a break in the session of the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation on Capital Hill yesterday.

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

In less than 15 minutes after its defeat, a $3.88 million local appropriations bill was reconsidered by the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation, which eventually passed it.

The bill was initially defeated on a 14-3 vote at 12:05pm, but it passed when it was reconsidered at 12:18pm on a 16-1 vote.

Lawmakers spent two hours debating and amending the pork barrel bill. The discussions reached emotional highs during floor amendment discussion, and when the bill got defeated, reconsidered, then passed.

The bill now heads to Gov. Benigno R. Fitial.

Rep. Justo S. Quitugua's House Local Bill 16-35 initially failed to pass with only 14 "yes" votes and three "no" votes when the roll call wrapped up at

See FROM on Page 4

CNMI seal for US House ceiling nears completion

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Fabrication of the seal of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands that is to be installed on the ceiling of the U.S. House of Representatives is nearing completion, Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP) announced this week. The seal, approximately two feet in diameter, will be added to those of all the other States and Territories above the House Chamber in the U.S. Capitol.

See CNMI on Page 4

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The House Paint Shop is putting the finishing touches on the CNMI seal that U.S. Rep. Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (D-MP), right, requested be installed with the seals of all the other States and Territories on the ceiling of the House Chamber in the U.S. Capitol building. Kevin Hayden is one of the Decorator Painters who is hand-painting the seal. The seal is expected to be mounted into the ceiling at the end of this month, while the House is in recess.

Local

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Bellas: Charitable institutions to divvy up $500K

From 5, number of applicants increase to 18

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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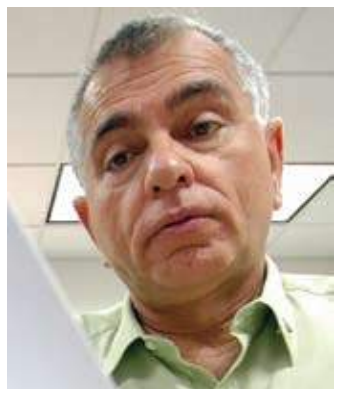
REPORTER

The Garment Workers Trust Fund will choose not just one charitable institution but a host of others who will divide among them the over $500,000 that's left over from the $20 million settlement in the class action against the garment industry.

"If they [charitable institutions] are qualified, we might give some to everybody. We're not giving all the money to one charity," according to trust fund chair Timothy H. Bellas in a phone interview with Saipan Tribune yesterday.


Bellas

Bellas said they hope to award the money to qualified charitable institutions by the end of this year, pursuant to U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson's intention.

When the trust fund announced the plan to donate the leftover money, it received applications from about four to five charitable institutions in the CNMI.

Munson, however, asked the trust fund to republish the notice to charities because of the few number of applicants. This prompted the trust fund to republish the notice in local newspapers early this month.

As a result of the republication, Bellas said they now have a total of 18 charitable institutions or organizations in the CNMI that have applied for a share of the funds.

Bellas said they stopped accepting applications on Dec. 15.

When asked about the trust fund's next step, the former judge explained that they will present all 18 applicants to the trust fund trustees.

Aside from Bellas, the other trustees are former California Supreme Court justice Cruz Reynoso and former Washington State Supreme Court chief justice Richard Guy.

Bellas said the trustees will decide if the applicants are approved and how much will be awarded for each one.

He said he could only estimate the leftover money as over $500,000 because they are still using portions of the funds to repatriate former garment workers.

"I just signed the bunch of checks today to purchase [plane] tickets and to give $100 to each person. So we're still sending people home," he said.

The trust fund chairman said they will look at what they have left and then will try to make some kind of division based on a formula that they will come up.

"Maybe, like we give a large number to the Red Cross, for example. But we might give to a church or something too," he said.

The former Garment Oversight Board established the trust fund. The board was set up pursuant to the $20-million settlement agreement in the class action against the garment industry.

This month, the trust fund gave $350 each to 215 former garment workers as a one-time charitable contribution to them.

This developed after Munson approved the trust fund's proposal to approve the payment of $165,550 to some former garment workers out of the $722,873 left over from the funds.

The court also granted the trust fund's request to provide air fare transportation to 63 garment workers to their point of origin, with an additional $100 for travel allowance.

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PSS to stop hiring non-highly qualified staff by 2011

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Public School System will no longer employ non-highly qualified teachers starting 2011 after the U.S. Department of Education reminded PSS of the need to fully comply with the federal mandate.

PSS has until July 31, 2011, to comply with the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act, which requires the hiring of only highly qualified personnel in public schools.

Education Commissioner Dr. Rita A. Sablan confirmed with the Board of Education that a ranking USDOE official reiterated this point with her during a recent meeting.

"The USDOE reiterated the HQT requirement and we must work on meeting this…100 percent compliance requirement," she told the board.

Sablan said the 2011 deadline applies to everybody—administrators, counselors, and teachers. For principals, they have to pass the Praxis test in administration and supervision.

BOE has set three requirements for a teacher to be deemed highly qualified: a degree, valid teaching certificates, and passing the Praxis tests.

Of the 564 classroom teachers in public schools right now, 399 or 71 percent are already deemed highly qualified, receiving a higher compensation than those who have yet to pass the requirements. The remaining 29 percent are either awaiting the results of their Praxis 1 or 2 tests or have yet to take the tests.

PSS Human Resource Officer Charlie Kenty disclosed yesterday that in the Special Education and Early Intervention programs, 28 of the 35 teachers are already HQTs, which translates to 80 percent of the total teacher population in both programs.

In elementary schools, 98 of the 286 teachers are considered HQTs; 48 teachers are highly qualified in middle schools; and 125 in high schools passed all three requirements.

Kenty noted that a big bulk of the 29 percent non-HQTs is with the elementary level.

However, he is optimistic the figure will significantly rise in coming months as many have just taken the exams last month.

The Board of Education had instructed the Commissioner's Office to remain focused on giving assistance to non-highly qualified teachers to enable them to meet the requirements.

Board vice chair Herman T. Guerrero disclosed that PSS allocated some $3 million yearly in trainings and workshops that will help teachers meet the standards.

He described the effort as an "important investment of PSS."

His committee, fiscal and personnel affairs panel is also looking at reviving the Education Academy at Marianas High School to help build local capacity on island.

PSS has been holding various institutes every summer to help teachers pass the requirements.

Saipan Tribune learned that a slight dip in the number of HQTs was a result of the departure of over 20 HQT teachers last school year.

The Association of Commonwealth Teachers earlier pushed for amendments to the HQT policy, saying the rules were among the "highest" requirements in the region.

However, the board has been firm in its decision to keep the policy and continue assisting those who have yet to comply with the requirements.

To encourage teachers, a compensation plan was adopted, providing attractive salary packages to those who qualify and a salary cut for those who fail to meet the standards.

Based on the compensation plan, a highly qualified teacher can receive maximum of $47,000 annual pay. A classroom teacher who has yet to take or pass both Praxis tests receives a starting salary of $28,000.

Dandan robbery victim was shot

The female cashier who was initially reported as injured when an armed masked man robbed a store in Dandan Monday morning was actually shot.

A source at the Department of Public Safety yesterday disclosed that the cashier, a Korean national in her mid-40's, was shot on the face with a .22 rifle.

The cashier is now at the Commonwealth Health Center's intensive care unit.

The initial DPS report did not specifically mention how the robber assaulted the cashier.

The DPS source said the robber used a .22 rifle, which can be legally obtained in the CNMI.

Police preliminary investigation showed that the suspect, armed with a rifle and wearing a mask, robbed Jenny's Mart by pointing the gun at the cashier.

After taking an estimated $2,000 cash, the robber ran north along the secondary roadway in front of the store.

The suspect was described as about 5'9" tall and weighed between 175 and 220 lbs. He was wearing a black long-sleeved shirt with blue trim pant. He covered his face with a dark cloth. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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NMC

From Page 1

message to the Board of Regents.

Yesterday, a formal letter showing the results of the assembly was submitted to Board of Regents members and faculty staff. The issue is expected to be tackled in the next scheduled board meeting.

Focused on students

When asked for comments, Fernandez said she remains focused on students and she has already begun meeting with faculty members earlier this week to hear and discuss their concerns.

"The meetings have been very productive," said Fernandez, adding that the suggestions from the discussions will be incorporated into the new human resource policies the college is working on.

The president is scheduled to meet with the Faculty Senate this afternoon.

"I will continue to work closely with all of them and the Faculty Senate leaders in the next few days to address concerns without delay," Fernandez added.

She said the news should not distract anyone from carrying out the mission of the college in promoting student learning and success.

Since assuming the presidency, Fernandez said she has had to make difficult and challenging decisions that she believes are in the best interest of NMC.

"I've always maintained an open door policy here on campus, and I am more than happy to meet with faculty members who want to air their specific concerns," added Fernandez.

Board reaction

In a statement yesterday, acting board chair Maria Malua Peter said the board supports the president's effort to meet with faculty members to hear their concerns.

"We stand by the president's efforts to meet with faculty members and to consider the range of views that are being conveyed by the college community," said Peter, adding that "we support her efforts to respectfully and constructively resolve issues."

'Climate of fear'

Interviews with some faculty members who were present at the assembly showed that the vote of no confidence was a result of what they claim is a "climate of fear" at the college, in addition to the unusual practice of non-renewals and termination of employees' contracts.

One of the faculty members, who agreed to speak on condition of anonymity, conceded that Fernandez initiated a dialogue with faculty staff but it was described as "for selected faculty members" only.

Saipan Tribune learned that since the non-renewal of instructor Sam McPhetres' contract early this month, many have expressed disappointment while others say they are "frightened."

Saipan Tribune was told that Fernandez has yet to respond to a letter from McPhetres' dean, Frank Sobolewski, asking for the basis of the instructor's non-renewal. Students are also circulating a petition that will ask the president to disclose the reasons behind the instructor's departure.

FROM

From Page 1

12:05pm. Four members were absent.

The appropriations bill needed at least 16 "yes" votes, or three fourths of the 21-member delegation.

The bill also initially sought $3.65 million from poker revenue to go toward pet projects and programs for Fiscal Year 2010, but a substitute bill offered during yesterday's session increased the amount to $3.88 million.

The bill appropriates the biggest chunk—$3 million—to the Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance, and over $145,000 for the Northern Marianas Trades Institute, which already received $200,000 in federal funds when President Obama signed an omnibus spending bill into law last week.

Those who voted "no" on the pork barrel bill were Rep. Tina Sablan (Ind-Saipan), Rep. Ed Salas (R-Saipan), and Sen. Maria "Frica" Pangelinan (D-Saipan), due mainly to lack of accountability and reporting in the pet projects funded.

They also described some of the pet projects as a "waste" of taxpayers' money.

When the bill got defeated, Rep. Rep. David Apatang (R-Saipan) immediately stood up, showed disappointment over the voting results, and left the chamber.

Rep. Oscar M. Babauta (Cov-Saipan) made a motion to reconsider the delegation's vote on the bill, which he described as an "important legislation," especially because of the education programs it will fund as early as January.

"This is unfair. We need to be cognizant of the fact that we're going to fund education programs," he told his colleagues.

He also said: "This is the season for giving. This is a present for the people of the Third Senatorial District."

Quitugua said if the bill is not passed, then the Department of Finance will not be able to release funds for the SHEFA scholarship program in January.

"There's about 800 students relying on SHEFA scholarship money," he said.

After a short recess, Delegation chairman Rep. Ray A. Tebuteb (R-Saipan) reconvened the session at 12:10pm.

Second voting

Those pushing for the pork barrel bill's passage needed to get two additional "yes" votes and they turned to Salas to change his vote.

They also called for Rep. Heinz S. Hofschneider (R-Saipan), who was in the legislative building but was not present in the chamber when the voting happened, to support the bill.

When the bill was reconsidered and voted again, Salas and Hofschneider's crucial "yes" votes resulted in the pork barrel bill's passage, 16-1, at 12:18pm.

Only Sablan voted "no" on the second round of voting.

Pangelinan immediately left the House chamber when the initial voting results were known. She was absent during the second round of voting.

Sablan expressed disappointment over the reconsideration of the bill.

"Am I surprised? Of course not. No amount of preparation we do ever really matters because we get the bill on the floor, and then a substitute bill is offered right away, and everybody wants to have their pork added to it. Everything we do today is perfectly a repetition of what we do every session," Sablan told *Saipan Tribune* right after the second round of voting.

Sablan said there's no fiscal analysis or accountability in the programs and projects funded every year.

Before stating his vote on the second round of voting, Salas told his colleagues: "This is one of the toughest bills that I have to vote on. A lot of items here, I do not necessarily agree with. It's tough. But I did promise the kids I will support funding their trip to the Carnegie Hall. As much as I want to vote no, I'd vote yes."

The bill appropriates $39,985 for Saipan Southern High School's Manta Ray Band for its trip and performance at the Carnegie Hall in New York City on April 17-21, 2010. Salas supported giving an additional $30,000 to this program.

Tradeoff?

In an interview with *Saipan Tribune* minutes later, Salas said he had to weigh between killing the bill because of the questionable pet projects included in it and not funding the education programs he supports, including the Manta Ray Band's trip to New York and other education and sports activities.

"I do not want to sacrifice education programs," he said, adding that he also supports a $150,000 funding for a road paving in Kagman, a $20,000 funding for San Vicente basketball court repairs, over $145,000 for the NMTI, and $75,000 for the Saipan Zoning Office.

When asked whether there's a tradeoff for his change of vote, Salas said it is not necessarily a tradeoff, and there's no guarantee that what he was told by his colleagues would happen.

"My concerns were on some of the provisions of the bill but I was told my concerns can be addressed through a possible line item veto by the governor. It could be a tradeoff but there's no guarantee that the governor will line item veto, but I am hopeful," he said.

'Funding luxury sports'

Rep. Stanley Torres (Ind-Saipan) raised concern about appropriating $25,000 for the annual fishing derby, which he said is an event for "rich fishermen."

Sablan added that it is a "luxury sports."

Sablan also questioned the $25,000 funding for portable toilets at the Santa Lourdes Shrine, the $180,000 for the secondary Fedus Road pavement (this was later reduced to $100,000), the $50,000 for the annual CNMI Little League, and the $35,000 for a power extension in the Obyan area.

After the bill passed, the delegation went into recess to join a Christmas luncheon it hosted in the House lobby at the legislative building on Capital Hill. The delegation went back to session at past 1:30pm.

LEGAL

From Page 1

million is on top of the $231 million court judgment in June.

The Public School System tops the list, with unpaid employer contributions amounting to over $13 million as of Oct. 30 this year.

During yesterday's Board of Education meeting, PSS financial consultant Ed Tenorio disclosed that in fiscal years 2008 and 2009, PSS amassed $14.7 million in unpaid employer contributions. Of the amount, $11.4 million is for locally-funded employees while $3.3 million is for federally-funded employees. Tenorio admitted that PSS has yet to identify funding for this.

Aguon disclosed that, of the eight autonomous agencies, only the Commonwealth Ports Authority has so far approached and settled the issue with the Fund. A formula is now being implemented for CPA to settle its obligations and it is expected to be fully paid off in the next four to five months.

The rest of the independent agencies that owe the Fund employer contributions include Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Department Public Lands, Northern Marianas College, Tinian Municipal Treasury, Commonwealth Development Authority, and Marianas Visitors Authority.

Saipan Tribune learned that a big bulk of the agencies' debt to the Fund was a result of the changes in the laws pertaining to the employer's contribution rate from 36 percent to 11 percent.

Fund board chair Sixto Igisomar described the resolution of this issue as "very slow" and wants to see a more pro-active approach.

"I really hate to see us let it go," he told the trustees, hinting that the Fund may explore other "paths" after numerous correspondences from the agency were left unanswered.

The idea was echoed by other trustees, describing the move as the right direction for the Fund to pursue.

"Let them know that if they will not pay…we will take them to court," trustee Jerry Crisostomo said.

Aguon admitted that besides sending out letters to these agencies, no formal meetings have been set up between the parties.

Despite the unpaid obligation of PSS, though, it showed diligence in paying in full for its employees who want to retire, Aguon said.

He also disclosed that DPL remains on the list with unpaid employer's contributions despite having already shown a receipt that it has remitted the amount to the Finance Department. It was disclosed that DPL remitted over $100,000 but this was not reflected on the records of the Fund.

"DPL has settled its outstanding account, but the money it remitted did not reflect on the general fund. They showed us the receipt…but we never received it," Aguon reported to the board.

Trustee Adelina Roberto said the question must be posed to the central government but, as far as the Fund is concerned, DPL remains unpaid.

CNMI

From Page 1

"Having the CNMI seal overhead will be a very visible symbol that the people of the Northern Mariana Islands are truly part of the American political family now that we have our own voice in Congress," said Sablan.

The plaster seal is currently being hand-painted. Once that is done, according to the offices of the Architect of the Capitol and the Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol, scaffolds will be erected and the seal will be fastened into place. The work is expected to be completed by the end of the month.

It will have taken almost a year from Jan. 6, the day Sablan was sworn in to office, to the day of installation.

"As I looked around the Chamber that day," he explains, "I notice the seals overhead—and the absence of the Northern Marianas seal.

"So I thought I'd better do something about that."

Sablan began his inquiries that very same day by contacting the Architect of the Capitol. The Architect is responsible to the Congress for care and maintenance of the House and Senate office buildings, the Supreme Court, and the Library of Congress, as well as the Capitol building itself.

But an addition or alteration of the House Chamber required the permission of Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Sablan learned. So on Jan. 30, Kilili made his request to the Speaker.

By permitting the installation of the seal, he wrote, "you will assure that when my constituents and citizens from any place in the United States who visit the House look up they will see that this truly is the people's House, where all are represented."

The Speaker quickly gave her permission and ordered the Northern Mariana Islands seal be added to those already in place.

But there was a problem.

The last time a seal had been added to the House Chamber was 1983, when Speaker "Tip" O'Neill approved the installation of the seal of the District of Columbia.

Twenty-six years later it wasn't immediately clear who could do the work.

"Fabrication of the seal is a specialized craft and very few contractors have the required experience," the Architect of the Capitol wrote to Sablan. "We started our search for a fabricator by researching historic records to identify the company that fabricated the last seal that was added to the Chamber ceiling.

"We identified the company, but attempts to contact them failed. It turned out the company had moved."

But the U.S. Congress has its means.

The company was finally tracked down at its new location in August. A contract was signed and work began on the Northern Mariana Islands seal.

Today, the plaster cast seal sits at the House Paint Shop. The complex colors of the design have been reproduced using the Northern Mariana Islands flag in Sablan's office as a guide. The Superintendent of the Capitol is so pleased with the result he's ordered awards for the Decorator Painters who did the work.

Now, all that remains is final approval from the House Office Building Commission, which is composed of the Speaker Pelosi, House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, and House Minority Leader John Boehner, to begin work inside the House Chamber.

Although the House has completed its legislative business for the year, which means there should be no problem with putting up the scaffolding for three days and installing the seal, there is some small, outside chance that the leadership may have to call the House back into session the week after Christmas. In that case the seal would have to wait.

"I really don't want to have to go all the way back to Washington right after Christmas," says Sablan. "I've had very little time in the Northern Marianas this year, because Congress has been working like never before to accomplish our goals.

"When I go back, I want to look up and – finally – see the Northern Mariana Islands seal overhead." ***(PR)***

Wives of 3 GOP stalwarts reassigned to Kagman facility

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The wives of three Republican leaders have been reassigned and stationed at the Kagman Juvenile Detention and Correctional Facility, but Community and Cultural Affairs Secretary Melvin Faisao declined to comment on whether the reassignment is politically motivated.

Faisao said he could not comment on personnel matters.

In a Dec. 18 memorandum, Faisao informed Division of Youth Services director Calvani Deleon Guerrero that three employees are "officially designated to be stationed at the Kagman Juvenile Detention and Correctional Facility effective immediately."

He said the memorandum is an "internal" document that should have not been released to the media.

The three concerned employees include Guadalupe T. Pangelinan, who will serve as the unit accountant and timekeeper, and will perform other administrative duties. She is the wife of Republican stalwart and former Lands and Natural Resources Secretary Tom Pangelinan.

Missy Aldan, according to Faisao's memo, will serve as social worker and youth caretaker. She is the wife of Republican Rep. Ray A. Tebuteb.

Vivian T. Sablan will also serve as social worker and youth caretaker. She is the wife of Republican Jess Wabol.

The three used to be assigned on Capital Hill.

In another letter, Faisao told Deleon Guerrero of the reassignment of three other DYS employees, replacing the three others he reassigned to the Kagman juvenile detention center.

Faisao said Rita Castro should be reporting to DYS Administration to serve as accountant effective immediately.

Jennifer Tanaka will be replacing Sablan to oversee the emergency shelter.

Resel Billy Magofna, meanwhile, will be taking over Aldan's position at the Juvenile Probation Unit.

Faisao said Alice Romolor will remain at the Parent Education Program pending further instruction from him.

"A correspondence of this nature is forthcoming," Faisao told Deleon Guerrero, who could not be reached for comment.

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Five PSS principals get certification, now deemed HQ

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Five acting school principals will soon be appointed to permanent positions after successfully complying with all the highly qualified requirements set by the Public School System and the Board of Education.

Board vice chair Herman T. Guerrero disclosed yesterday that three acting elementary school and two acting secondary school principals have completed the certification requirements and obtained the necessary degrees.

These administrators include Charlotte Camacho of Gregorio T. Camacho Elementary, Glenn Muna of Oleai Elementary, Julian Hofschneider of Tinian Elementary, Sharlene Manglona of Rota High School, and Craig Garrison of Saipan Southern High School.

PSS earlier said there are still 25 administrators who have yet to become fully certified and were still serving in acting capacities since early this year.

Only 12 school administrators are currently fully certified. Of these 12, eight are principals and four are vice principals. With the addition of five new certified principals, the number will soon rise to 13.

Like teachers and counselors, a compensation plan for administrators is being enforced at PSS, where the salary provided is based on the certification they have obtained and years of service.

To become fully certified, school administrators must have a degree or higher, pass Praxis tests, and must have completed all courses to get an administrator's certification, which Saipan Tribune learned is composed of seven different "certificates."

Majority of these courses are offered in online universities while other sessions are offered by PSS, which brings in experts from the U.S. mainland.

Yesterday, the board agreed to revisit the policy of how principals are evaluated after board member Tanya King expressed concern about the possibility of "bias" in the process.

PSS earlier disclosed that PSS will retain and assist the "acting" school administrators until they became compliant with the standard.

Board members said yesterday they are optimistic that all school administrators will be in compliance before the deadline of the federal mandate in 2011.

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Woman and fiancé facing 'ice' trafficking charges OK'd visit

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal court allowed yesterday a woman who is facing trafficking methamphetamine or "ice" to visit her fiancé, who is also in jail for the same charges.

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson modified the bail conditions the court had previously set on Sharee Demapan Diaz to allow her a one-time visit with Jawn Joyner.

Munson issued the modification after Diaz and the U.S. government agreed to a limited change in the terms and conditions of her temporary release.

Assistant U.S. Attorney James Benedetto, on behalf of the U.S. government, and attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for Diaz, agreed to amend the "no contact" provision in the previous court's order to allow Diaz to have one visit with Joyner.

Joyner has been separately charged in federal court and is in custody.

According to the agreement, during Diaz's visit she may discuss her future with Joyner, including a resolution of the case.

Benedetto and Dotts agreed that such contact by Diaz would not be considered a violation of any terms and conditions of confinement placed on Joyner.

U.S. Probation Officer Melinda N. Brunson recently reported that Diaz got into an argument with her mother and grabbed a knife.

Because of the incident, police arrested Diaz for disturbing the peace, Brunson disclosed in her report.

Dotts and U.S. Attorney's Office Saipan branch chief Eric O'Malley then agreed that Diaz's release to a third party custodian should be temporarily suspended for at least one week.

Drug Enforcement Administration agents arrested Diaz and Joyner last October after the U.S. government filed a complaint charging the two with conspiracy to distribute "ice."

The complaint also charged Joyner and Diaz with three counts of possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute.

DEA said that Diaz was Joyner's retail seller, runner and intermediary.

Man arrested for allegedly sexually abusing minor

Police arrested Monday a 32-year-old man who allegedly sexually abused a minor and beat her up.

John Sanchez was arrested for sexual abuse of a minor and assault and battery.

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth Govendo imposed a $50,000 cash bail for Sanchez's temporary liberty. The defendant was taken to court yesterday afternoon for his initial appearance.

Detective Steven A. Castro stated in his report that police first arrested Sanchez on Saturday for allegedly slapping a female teenager.

Castro said that Sanchez slapped the victim because she was talking to a male person at the carnival grounds near a school.

During an interview with the victim, she disclosed that she had sex with Sanchez at a motel in Gualo Rai in July 2007, Castro said.

Sanchez also allegedly beat up the victim in September 2008, but she did not report it to police.

Police on Friday arrested two men and a woman for sexual abuse of minors in separate incidents. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

McDonald's presents $500 to MHS' Ornest

JOVAN I. FRED

Teacher of the Year Maria Ornest, left, receive the $500 check from Saipan McDonald's owner Joe Ayuyu during the presentation yesterday at the McDonald's Gualo Rai branch.

By JOVAN I. FRED
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REPORTER-TRAINEE

Saipan McDonald's presented yesterday a $500 check to overall Teacher of the Year awardee Maria Ornest of Marianas High School in appreciation for her hard work and dedication to students.

Ornest, who has been teaching Physical Science at Marianas High School since 2006, told *Saipan Tribune* she is not sure yet how she will spend the money. "It's the holiday season and I'll celebrate it some way," she said.

Ornest will be representing the CNMI in the competition for the "National Teacher of the Year."

Saipan McDonald's owner Joe Ayuyu said the monetary award is to show the company's appreciation to the islands' hard-working teachers. "It is another way to keep the positive attitude in education and to show how much we appreciate their hard work," he said.

At the same time, Ayuyu said, this has become a tradition for the company. "Working with the Public School System and supporting schools is what we have done for many years now," he said.

Ornest said she loves teaching and reaching out to students. "I love teaching and I can't imagine doing anything else," she said. "All teachers are hard-working and I am very honored to be chosen this year."

Involvement in school events and other activities gives Ornest the opportunity to reach out to students and respond to their needs. "With the full support and involvement of parents, this can help kids" do well in school, she said.

Ayuyu emphasized the need for creativity among teachers when teaching. "Creativity of teachers is important…because they can do more to better our children's education."

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PUBLIC NOTICE
(This Notice is paid by NMHC with HUD Funds.)

Governor Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, and the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors, through its Chairwoman, Ms. Marcie M. Tomokane, wish to announce that its Consolidated Annual Performance Report (CAPER) for Program Year 2008, is available for review and comments by the general public no later than December 29, 2009. Written comments must be submitted to the NMHC Office in Garapan, Saipan, P. O. Box 500514, Saipan, MP 96950, or by contacting Ms. Zenie P. Mafnas, Planner/Grant Writer, at 234-9447/7689.

The report will be submitted to the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), Honolulu Office, by December 31, 2009. The CAPER encompasses the performance assessment of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Home Investment Partnership Act (HOME) and Emergency Shelter Grant (ESG) Programs in the Commonwealth.

The report is available at the NMHC Central Office in Saipan and at the respective NMHC Field Offices in Rota and Tinian during regular business hours, Monday through Friday, except CNMI holidays.

/s/ Marcie M. Tomokane
Chairwoman of the Board

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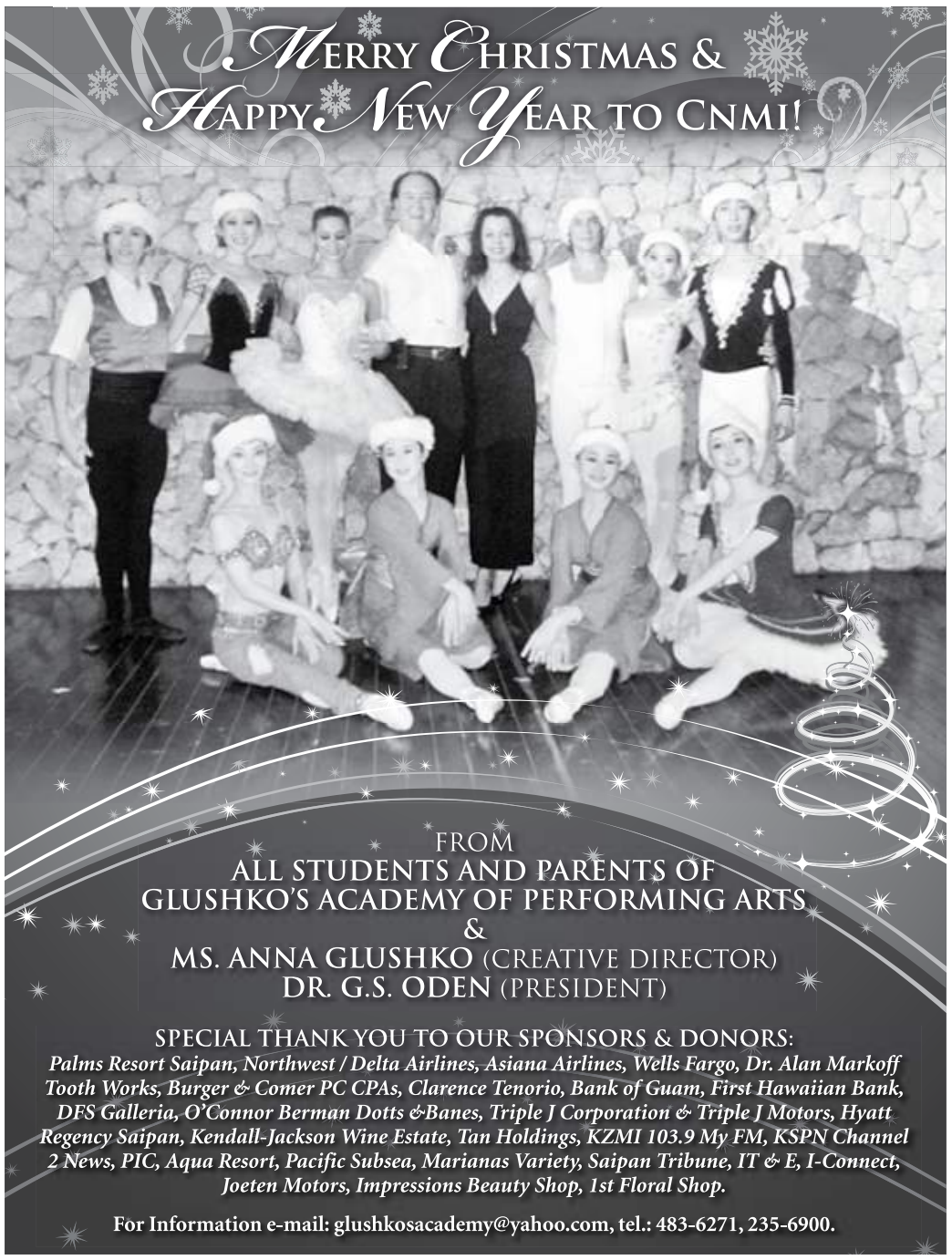
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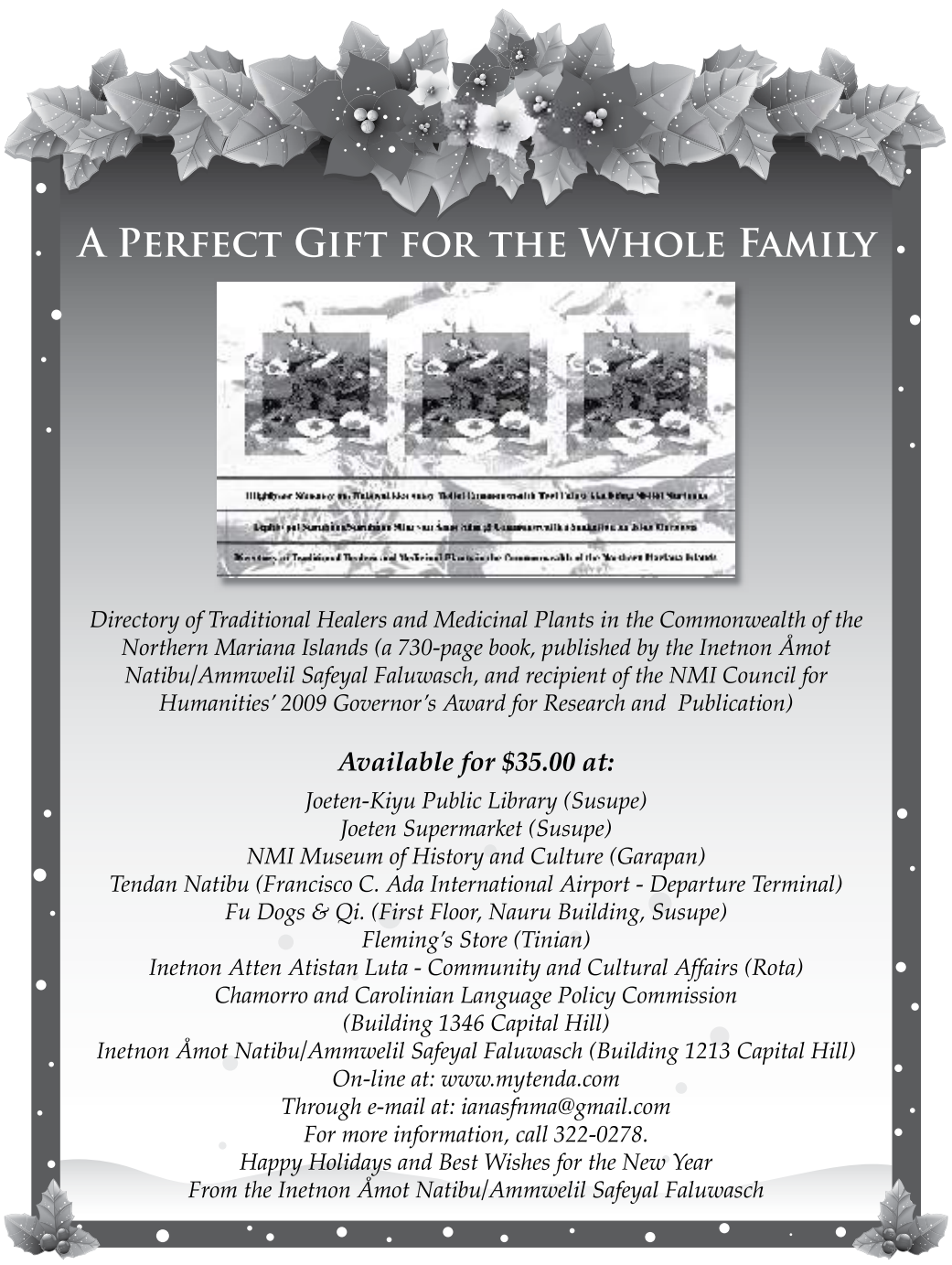
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Joyner: Guam buildup plan is a partnership of stakeholders

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
Moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Coastal Resources Management director John Joyner describes the U.S. Department of Defense's military buildup plan in Guam as a partnership among all stakeholders that include the Northern Mariana Islands.

Joyner said the CNMI was initially not welcome at the initial partnering sessions of the military and Guam officials but this did not prevent the CNMI from keeping at it until it finally gained access to the sessions.

This came about after the buildup plan identified Tinian as a potential site for extensive exercises when the troops relocate to Guam starting in 2012.

Joyner emphasized the important role the CNMI government and local agencies like CRM will play because the buildup eyes the movement of troops to Tinian by air and sea, building of infrastructure, and use of high-powered materials and equipment for their exercises.

With the CNMI now sitting at the table, Joyner said the CNMI is now being kept abreast at every point of the plan.

"Lines of communication is open and transparency is quite high," said Joyner.

A military task force created by the government, he said, is meeting regularly and an economic impact hearing is scheduled next month.

Besides its economic impact, the military buildup is also expected to influence people's social and cultural values.

"It is important to know the effects and influence of this plan to us. We're concerned of many things such as erosion and noise and how our people would be protected," Joyner said.

The military buildup plan has three main components. These include the development and construction of facilities and infrastructure to support about 8,600 Marines and 9,000 dependents who will be relocated from Okinawa, Japan, to Guam.

The U.S. Navy eyes the construction of a new deep-draft wharf in Apra Harbor, Guam to support a transient nuclear-powered aircraft carrier.

For the U.S. Army, it wants to develop facilities and infrastructure in Guam to support relocating about 600 military personnel and 900 dependents to establish and operate an Army headquarters.

The buildup is one of the largest movements ever planned in the history of the U.S. military.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

Dec. 23, 1998

PSS may cut jobs

The Public School System had escaped a 10 percent wage cut, all right, but nonrenewals of job contracts for nonteaching staff look inevitable in March. About 270 custodians, janitors, counselors and school principals would be affected if the nonrenewals go ahead. But Education Commissioner Rita H. Inos said several options are being considered in order to keep some, not all, of them. She said: "We would have some abilities to hire some back. But there would be no hiring all at one time." Anthony Pellegrino, education board member, said one option might be to reduce their salaries or offer them hourly wage rates. However, if school principals agree to tap their operational funds for salaries, then they might be kept as support staff, he said during Monday night's board meeting.

Govt to launch crackdown vs embezzlers

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday pressed the Attorney General's Office to pursue the recommendations of the Office of the Public Auditor which called for the prosecution of government officials who were found to have misspent public funds. The governor made the call, the first since he assumed office in January, in another attempt to strengthen accountability of officials holding public office. The public auditor's office has flooded the AGO with recommendations seeking punishment of officials who have erred in the past for ignoring procurement regulations to mishandling of government money.

Dec. 23, 2002

Rebate talks hit glitch

The Department of Finance has not printed yet all the rebate and refund checks that are supposed to be released beginning today, pending final loan negotiations with the Bank of Guam. As of press time yesterday, officials had received no confirmation yet from the bank about the release of the $19-million loan. Sources privy to the issue said the Department of Finance began the printing of the checks Friday but they eventually stopped after the bank's legal counsel raised some issues relating to the conditions set forth in the agreement between the bank and the CNMI government.

Narita-Saipan flights begin

Continental Airlines has begun direct flights between Narita International Airport in Tokyo, Japan, and the Saipan International Airport-much earlier than the announced resumption by April 2003. Yesterday, Continental's Flight CO964 was to depart Narita around 9:30pm and was expected to arrive on Saipan about 2:05am this morning. Flight schedules posted on Continental's Internet website show daily available flights today until Christmas Day. Direct flights from Saipan back to Narita are also available from today, with departure time slated at 6pm. Continental Micronesia president and chief executive officer Mark Erwin told the Saipan Tribune that, although the Narita-Saipan direct flights were to officially start by April 1, 2003, they have decided to start such operations "immediately."

Dec. 23, 2003

EPA opposes Sugar Dock project

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is opposed to the planned dredging and renovation of the Sugar Dock, citing potential adverse environmental impact entailed by the project. In a letter to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, EPA National Wetlands expert Thomas G. Yocom said his agency could not support the issuance of permit for the project. The EPA, the nation's premier environmental agency, took this position as the first public hearing on the proposed project was to take place on Saipan last night. Several residents had earlier expressed opposition to the plan by the Commonwealth Ports Authority, citing the imminent possibility of erosion and the certain alteration of marine habitat. The residents had also cited their affinity to Sugar Dock.

Agencies cautioned on dredging plan

The administration has advised concerned government agencies to be careful in their review of the proposed Sugar Dock dredging project amid massive protests from the community. Lt. Gov. Diego T. Benavente said Gov. Juan N. Babauta and himself are basically awaiting permitting agencies-Division of Environmental Quality, Coastal Resources Management, and Historical Preservation Office-to come up with their own recommendations on the project, which paves the way for a new Saipan-Tinian ferry route. "I asked agencies to review this carefully.

High court issues ruling in divorce/annulment case

The Commonwealth Supreme Court issued yesterday its decision in a divorce case, reversing a Superior Court divorce decree and remanding the case for entry of an annulment.

In *Islam v. Ayuyu & Callos*, the high court was faced with questions involving divorce and annulment of marriages.

In the first case, Mr. Islam sought an annulment from his first wife, Ms. Callos, who currently lives in the Philippines. Callos used to live in the Commonwealth, and while here, the couple had two children out of wedlock. After the second child was born, the wife relocated to the Philippines with the children. Under Philippine law at the time, the children were forced to take their mother's surname. Callos told Islam that their children were the subject of ridicule by their peers because they were illegitimate, and asked him to temporarily travel to the Philippines and register a marriage so the children could take his last name. Islam obliged, and the couple was purportedly married on July 4, 2002, in accordance with religious and Philippine law.

Three years later, Islam married a different woman, Ms. Ayuyu, this time in the CNMI. While Islam told his second wife about his two children in the Philippines, he failed to tell Ayuyu until two years into the marriage that he was married to Callos. Islam then filed for an annulment, or divorce in the alternative, to Callos. Ayuyu filed a similar claim against Islam shortly after. The trial court issued divorce decrees in both cases.

Islam appealed, claiming that an annulment should have been granted in his first marriage to Callos, and that neither a divorce nor an annulment should have been granted in the second marriage to Ayuyu.

The Supreme Court stated that there was substantial evidence indicating the existence of a marriage, even though Islam alleged several deficiencies under Philippine law. The Supreme Court found that even though the Islam never intended to enter into a marital relationship with his first wife, and married her solely to make their children legitimate, they had nevertheless contracted a valid marriage.

As for Islam's second marriage, the high court held that because he "was legally married to Ms. Callos, he was not able to enter into a subsequent marriage with Ms. Ayuyu." The high court reversed the Superior Court's divorce decree in the second marriage, and remanded the case for entry of an annulment. ***(PR)***

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Thank you for helping put the Happy in "Happy Holidays"

WELLS FARGO FINANCIAL

This is to inform our readers and the community that the Saipan Tribune *will not be published on Dec. 26, 2009, and Jan. 2, 2010, to enable its employees to observe the holidays on Dec. 25 and Jan. 1. Your understanding in this matter is greatly appreciated.*

Happy Holidays!

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

SHIPPING SCHEDULE

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Outbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETD Jakarta	ETD Bangkok	ETD P. Kelang	ETD Melbourne	ETD Singapore	ETD Hochiminh	ETD Busan	ETD Kobe	ETD Shanghai	ETD Auckland	ETD Manila	ETD Hongkong	ETD Kaoshiung	ETD Naha
MELL SEMBAWANG	023E	12/12 Sat	12/10 Thu	12/10 Thu	12/8 Tue	12/5 Sat	12/18 Fri	12/14 Mon	12/13 Sun	12/6 Sun	12/6 Sun	12/14 Mon	12/18 Fri	12/20 Sun	12/22 Tue
MELL SERAPONG	002E	12/19 Sat	12/17 Thu	12/17 Thu	12/15 Tue	12/12 Sat	12/25 Fri	12/21 Mon	12/20 Sun	12/13 Sun	12/13 Sun	12/21 Mon	12/25 Fri	12/27 Sun	12/29 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	031E	12/26 Sat	12/24 Thu	12/24 Thu	12/22 Tue	12/19 Sat	1/1 Fri	12/28 Mon	12/27 Sun	12/20 Sun	12/20 Sun	12/28 Mon	1/1 Fri	1/3 Sun	1/5 Tue
MELL SEMBAWANG	024E	1/2 Sat	12/31 Thu	12/31 Thu	12/29 Tue	12/26 Sat	1/8 Fri	1/4 Mon	1/3 Sun	12/27 Sun	12/27 Sun	1/4 Mon	1/8 Fri	1/10 Sun	1/12 Tue
MELL SERAPONG	003E	1/9 Sat	1/7 Thu	1/7 Thu	1/5 Tue	1/2 Sat	1/15 Fri	1/11 Mon	1/10 Sun	1/3 Sun	1/3 Sun	1/11 Mon	1/15 Fri	1/17 Sun	1/19 Tue
MELL SENTOSA	032E	1/16 Sat	1/14 Thu	1/14 Thu	1/12 Tue	1/9 Sat	1/22 Fri	1/18 Mon	1/17 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/18 Mon	1/22 Fri	1/24 Sun	1/26 Tue

Inbound from Asia	Voyage No.	ETA Guam	ETD Guam	ETA Saipan	ETA Yap	ETA Koror	ETA Davao	ETA GenSan	ETA Cebu	ETA Hongkong	ETA Kaoshiung	ETA Busan	ETA Yokohama	ETA Manila	ETA Singapore
MELL SEMBAWANG	023E	12/26 Sat	12/27 Sun	12/27 Sun	12/29 Tue	12/30 Wed	1/1 Fri	1/3 Sun	SKIP	1/8 Fri	1/9 Sat	1/14 Thu	2/2 Tue	1/17 Sun	1/13 Wed
MELL SERAPONG	002E	1/2 Sat	1/3 Sun	1/3 Sun	SKIP	1/6 Wed	1/8 Fri	1/10 Sun	SKIP	1/15 Fri	1/16 Sat	1/21 Thu	2/9 Tue	1/24 Sun	1/20 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	031E	1/9 Sat	1/10 Sun	1/10 Sun	1/12 Mon	1/13 Wed	1/15 Fri	1/17 Sun	SKIP	1/22 Fri	1/23 Sat	1/28 Thu	2/16 Tue	1/31 Sun	1/27 Wed
MELL SEMBAWANG	024E	1/16 Sat	1/17 Sun	1/17 Sun	SKIP	1/20 Wed	1/22 Fri	1/24 Sun	SKIP	1/29 Fri	1/30 Sat	2/4 Thu	2/23 Tue	2/7 Sun	2/3 Wed
MELL SERAPONG	003E	1/23 Sat	1/24 Sun	1/24 Sun	1/26 Mon	1/27 Wed	1/29 Fri	1/31 Sun	SKIP	2/5 Fri	2/6 Sat	2/11 Thu	3/2 Tue	2/14 Sun	2/10 Wed
MELL SENTOSA	032E	1/30 Sat	1/31 Sun	1/31 Sun	SKIP	2/3 Wed	2/5 Fri	2/7 Sun	SKIP	2/12 Fri	2/13 Sat	2/18 Thu	3/9 Tue	2/21 Sun	2/17 Wed

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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EDITORIAL

Completing the college years: Too many students start but never graduate

Too often, colleges and universities have blamed the poor performance of low-income and minority students on the preparation they received in high schools. Basically, their message was: Send us better students, and we'll show better results.

So it's nothing sort of a breakthrough that leaders of half the country's public colleges have embarked on an initiative to close racial and socioeconomic gaps in enrollment and graduation. Data from the Access to Success Initiative released this month paint a gloomy picture of low-income and minority students: Far too few enroll in college, and even fewer make it to graduation. Consider, for example, that 45 percent of low-income and minority students entering as freshmen in 1999 had received bachelor's degrees six years later, compared with 57 percent of other students.

Particularly disturbing were the findings about students entering two-year colleges, ostensibly a pathway to higher education for many who are underprepared: Only 7 percent of minority students who entered community college received bachelor's degrees within 10 years.

The analysis, conducted by the Education Trust and the National Association of System Heads, is valuable for its realistic look at the issues. It's also a call to action, with 24 public college and university systems pledging to halve, by 2015, the gaps in enrollment and completion that separate minority and low-income students from others. Each system now has a baseline from which to operate.

"This is not just research for research's sake," said Kati Haycock of the Education Trust. Key to the effort is the ability of schools to share ideas that work, such as redesigning freshman courses to provide more support for students, or doing outreach to African American churches to attract students. It's encouraging that at a time of real budget challenges, these schools are not shirking from their responsibility to ensure success for all its students.

(c) 2009, The Washington Post

Morrison asks: Santa Claus

By PATT MORRISON
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

Spoiler alert!

If you're younger than 13, stop reading right now. Correction: It's 2009; if you're younger than 10, stop reading right now.

The rest of you, I'd like you to meet Santa. For 11 months of the year, his nom de beard is Ted Roberts. Then, before Thanksgiving, he grooms his long, white whiskers and puts on that red suit and—presto. He sits on a Santa throne and listens to kids—and some grown-ups. He visits parties on Christmas Eve and reads *Twas the Night Before Christmas* and *The Polar Express* to children. He keeps up with the latest toys and gizmos. His favorite Santa movie is the Will Ferrell film *Elf*, chiefly because he likes Santa's boots. And the Macy's parade's Kris Kringle, he says, is a spot-on Santa.

LOS ANGELES TIMES
Santa Claus, known from January to November as Ted Roberts.

Decades ago, he was in Air Force intelligence operations in Southeast Asia. He spent 14 years as a Boy Scout leader. And for nearly 30 years, he was a photographer at the *Los Angeles Times*. And that, as you will read, is how his journey into his secret Santa superhero identity began.

Question: What was your Santa conversion moment?

Answer: I'd always had the beard, and it started to go white. I had to go photograph a Santa. He asked if I was ever Santa Claus. I told him yes, I was Santa Claus for my neighbors across the street and at their church. He said, "Your beard's too short." It was September, and I said, "It'll grow." He told me about the Santa guild, the Amalgamated Order of Real Bearded Santas, AORBS. They met once a year for lunch. They split up, so now there's another group called FORBS, Fraternal Order of Real Bearded Santas. I don't belong to any groups now. I'm just a guy who does Santa Claus.

Q: And then what happened?

A: I went home and talked to Kathy (his wife), and she was OK with that. I got hold of the president of AORBS. I managed to go to Adele's (costume shop) in Hollywood to get a Santa suit made—very expensive too, like $900. And I went to the University of Santa Claus for a day. That's all it is—a day with a whole bunch of other guys who looked like Santa.

Q: Did you all wear name tags that read "Hi, my name is Santa"?

A: That would have been confusing, wouldn't it? We saw a Santa chair, and learned where to get suits made—basically the dos and don'ts, like making sure your hands are always visible, a little bit of the history of Santa Claus, things like that. I guess they liked my look, because I was at Nordstrom the first year—that was 2004.

Q: Did you think it was going to be for just one year?

A: I didn't think it was going to be a long-term thing, but I've been in it for five years now. I enjoy the children. A 3-year-old, an 8-year-old—when they come to see Santa, everything in their minds is gone. They just stare at you, and they talk really quietly, especially the young ones. I wear a hearing aid now because I was in the service in Vietnam, and my hearing's sort of shot on my left side. And invariably, they stick them on my left knee. And they don't look at you—they're staring off into space because they're afraid. Then you get kids who just babble; they'll tell you everything. It's a big range, but for the most part they're very quiet, and some of them totally forget what they want.

I talk to children. I do not remain in ho-ho-ho mode—I talk. And I think everybody goes out of there happy.

Usually they want to know where the reindeer are. I tell them they're in the sky, parked. Boy, once they hit fourth grade, fifth grade, they don't really believe in Santa Claus, but at the same time, they don't want to let go, just in case.

Q: Do they test your beard to find out whether it's real?

A: I've had it pulled before. A couple of times, kids will ask me if I'm the real Santa Claus, and I just pull on my beard and say, "Yes, what do you think?" They go with that—the fact that it's real and it's white.

Q: Have kids ever said things like, "My mommy's sick and I want her to get better"?

A: The first year, I had a little girl sit on my lap and tell me she wanted help for her mommy. It terrified me. I thought she was being abused or something. She just wanted someone to help her mother do the dishes and the housework. I had a lady in her 60s come and sit on my lap and tell me she's in love with this guy and wanted to get married and asked if I could help her. I told her I'd see what I could do. She came back the next week and said, "I don't know what you did, but it worked." He proposed to her.

(A *Los Angeles Times* employee) named Giselle was in my studio on a Wednesday to have her picture made. On Saturday, she's walking through Nordstrom. I have a long line of little kids, and I said, "Hi, Giselle." She stopped dead in her tracks. She said, "How do you know me?" I said, "Santa Claus knows everybody."

The kids' eyes got really big, and I got her to come over and talk to me. We took a picture and I said, "You were in my studio three days ago, remember?"

How did I change? I put on a red suit—that was the only difference.

Q: How well-behaved are the parents?

A: Mostly pretty good. There are some parents who want to take lots and lots of pictures, to get the perfect expression.

Q: You do Santa at Christmas parties too. Do you wear your costume en route?

A: I have my suit on. I just don't put the jacket or the hat on. I wear black leather gloves because Santa would not drive a sleigh in white cotton gloves.

Q: You must have to put gas into your nonsleighmobile. Do people say anything to you at the gas station?

A: People always say hello. Sometimes they'll yell out their doors. During the rest of the year, once in awhile a kid will turn around and look (at the beard), and I'll just make that finger-in-front-of-the-lips "shush" thing, like it's our secret.

Q: Do kids ever ask for impossible stuff?

A: I get a lot of pony requests this year. I've never had pony requests before. Most want Transformers and Xboxes and Barbies this year. And three kids asked me for garbage trucks. The biggest one I got is a kid who came in with a catalog and he had things picked out. He was 8 years old, and he wanted this two-thirds-size Corvette that was capable of going 35 miles an hour. It was $32,000.

I looked at him and said, "This is $32,000. You can't even drive this! It says here you have to be 15." He said, "I know, but I want it." Then he turned to the next page, and it was a motor scooter, it was $496, and then he had another thing picked out, some kind of robot, it was almost $300. His mother did not look fazed.

Q: What was Santa like when you were growing up?

A: We lived in a tiny little town in Ohio with a town square, and

See MORRISON on Next Page

EDITORIAL POLICY The *Saipan Tribune* welcomes comments on any article, column, editorial, or topic that may be of interest to the public. Letters to the editor must include the name, address, and contact number of the contributor. Letters that are critical in nature should focus on issues, not personalities. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Random lessons I've learned this week

The only way to take control of your life, raise your standard of living and move beyond merely surviving is to create your own unique product or service that you offer to increasing numbers of people in exchange for the things of value that you desire. This simple formula applies to countries as well as people. A self-sufficient economy has its own products or services of value to export to the world. Similarly, a self-sufficient individual has something of value to exchange in the global marketplace. That thing of value is based on your natural talent, skill, or interest—in other words, your passion!

This has been a busy week. I've launched a few new Web sites, moved to a new apartment, gave a few tours of the island to help people from China, the USA and Russia discover Saipan, struck new business deals with vendors here on island, and read a few good books. In all the ups and downs, I've realized that there have been some valuable lessons I've learned, and which I'll share today.

Price and product are unrelated

I just finished reading a book titled *No B.S. Marketing to the Affluent* by Dan Kennedy, and have had the opportunity to put some of the ideas into practice in marketing Saipan to the world. One of the major lessons within this book is the concept that the price of a product or service is, and should be, considered separately from the product or service itself. In other words, if you are going to market your product or service to an upscale clientele for whom price is no object, then you cannot be bound by conventional thinking about what things should cost. Provided the value of a thing is communicated effectively, you can, for example, sell an umbrella rack for $6,000, a chocolate sundae for $25,000 (it's infused with 5 grams of 23 karat gold flakes), or a fly fishing cruise for person and 27 of his/her friends for the low cost of $366,000.

These are all real-life examples of the price flexibility inherent in all business ventures, which the savvy passionpreneur would do well to emulate. Your paintings, your crafts, your exports to the world are as valuable as you and others are willing to agree they are.

People are simply fertilizer for your personal growth.

One of the most helpful attitudes I've developed over the years has been how to interpret, respond to, and roll with the unexpected situations that arise in life. The secret has been expressed in many ways by different people. The essence of it, however, is that everything that happens to you, through the situations and people you encounter in life, present opportunities for you to grow spiritually and emotionally.

People will often do things that upset you, anger you, disappoint you or make you cry. The key to moving forward is to remember that every one of these situations you encounter has been orchestrated to strengthen you or to teach you something. The people who get under your skin have been attracted into your life with a lesson for you.

It's been said that you only get angry with a person when you encounter something in that person that mirrors something about yourself that you are unhappy with. Therefore, the opportunity in every situation that angers you is that you can then identify and change an aspect of yourself that the person you are angry with is bringing to the surface.

Are you angry at someone's rudeness, lack of courtesy, spitefulness? It's a sure sign that they are simply reflecting a part of yourself that you need to grow through. Ask yourself: *"I'm mad at John, but what part of my own personality is John reflecting? Am I the same way with other people? Where is the lesson here for me to grow?"*

Now, the converse is also important. Think about this. Have you ever been in a situation in which someone did something to you, and all your friends asked, "Doesn't that make you angry?" but you didn't actually feel anything?

The fact that you could just blow it off, walk away, forget about it, or even forgive them, is a sure sign that there was no real reflection of yourself coming from that person. You had already grown beyond the pettiness they displayed, and so they weren't pushing your buttons because there were no buttons there to push.

Just like the manure or fertilizer that farmers use to make their crops grow faster, people and the things they do, can serve the same purpose in your life. So, from now on, when you find yourself being royally ticked off by someone, just smile and remind yourself: *"He's nothing but fertilizer."*

How to get more done in less time

In the process of moving from one apartment to another, I was without Internet access for a few days. I ventured out to Java Joe's coffee shop to make use of theirs. The unexpected move came at what I initially felt was a "bad" time. I was in the middle of designing a Web site for a client, and had a deadline to meet in doing so. *"I work better at home*," I thought to myself. *"How will I be able to do a site design in a public place with people walking around and talking?"* Even so, I welcomed the opportunity to rise above the challenge and for a few days planned a two-hour slot of time during which to bring my laptop to work at the coffee shop.

You can likely guess what the result was. I got more done in those two hours than I typically do during the whole day sitting at home in front of the computer. With only a limited window of time (a purchase at the coffee shop comes with a password for two hours of Internet access), I was forced to plan in advance all the online tasks I needed to do, and then get right to work on each of them as quickly as possible. Sending e-mails, checking Web site statistics, handling customer service issues, fulfilling orders, fixing shopping cart software—tasks that often took the entire day—were quickly handled in just two hours each day, leaving me with more time to be more productive in other areas. (Of course, the challenge now is how to maintain that productivity now that I'm in the comfort of a new apartment with continuous Internet access!)

Anyway, these are just some random thoughts for your business ventures, and personal life. Enjoy the holidays!

■ ■ ■

***Note**: Ever wanted to direct your friends and family to a set of websites that revealed the best things about Saipan? Do what I do: send them to www.bestofsaipan.com!*

Note: Fans and followers of the book, *Chicken Feathers and Garlic Skin: Diary of a Chinese Garment Factory Girl on Saipan* may now find copies here on Saipan at Fu Dogs & Qi (pronounced chi), Saipan's only Asian Antiques Store, located on the first floor of the Nauru Building (the "360 building") in Susupe.

■ ■ ■

Until next week, remember, success is a journey, not a destination!

Walt F.J. Goodridge is author of 15 books including Turn Your Passion Into Profit. *Walt offers coaching and workshops to help people pursue and profit from their passions. Originally from the island of Jamaica, Walt has grown several successful businesses in the US, and now makes his home here in Saipan. To learn more about the Saipanpreneur Project and Walt's philosophy and formula visit www.saipanpreneur.com and www.passionprofit.com.*

THE SAIPANPRENEUR PROJECT

Creating economic success for the CNMI

By WALT F.J. GOODRIDGE
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Send article suggestions, entrepreneur nominations and feedback about this article to walt@passionprofit.com.

Letters to the Editor

Something is wrong

Your newspaper has covered various articles regarding the Northern Marianas College. One that interests me most is the non-renewal of Sam McPhetres' employment contract with Northern Marianas Colleges. I find this difficult to reconcile, knowing that McPhetres has contributed so much, not only to the CNMI educational system but also to historic events in Micronesia. His absence from NMC has to be investigated carefully to ensure that his non-renewal is justified. The community here in the CNMI should not take this matter lightly since McPhetres has given a lot to improve the educational quality of our young men and women at NMC.

I have known Mr. McPhetres for over 30 years and I have always associated him with history and education. In the late '60s, he was the district director of the U.S. Peace Corps in Chuuk (formerly known as Truk). He directed Peace Corps program with close to 200 volunteers. I was privileged to visit Truk to give a talk on mass media.

Mr. McPhetres in the early '70s was involved in developing a political education program designed to inform the citizens of the Trust Territory of their political options in a post-Trust Territory environment. He coordinated with international organizations for the Trust Territory Government and liaised for the Trusteeship Council of the United Nations. If anybody knows anything about the island nations, it is McPhetres.

I read in your paper that there are about 27 vacant positions at the college. Something is wrong and I respectfully ask the Board of Regents of NMC to look into the matter immediately before we lose our accreditation.

I appeal to the Board of Regents to look into this matter as I consider the non-renewal of Mr. McPhetres a serious issue that cannot be left unresolved.

David M. Sablan
Papago, Saipan

E-mail con

Someone—presumably in the UK—is posing as a person from the CNMI, claiming to have lost their money and wants to borrow money to return home.

It's a fraud.

If you receive such a request—ignore it.

So far I have received two identical pleas from two different people, both known to me and both of whom state they are "stranded" in the UK and seek a loan.

One for $1,800 the other for $2,500.

Here's the gist of the message:

"How are you doing? hope all is well, I'm sorry that i didn't inform you about my traveling to England for a Seminar.I need a favor from you as soon as you receive this e-mail because i misplaced my wallet on my way to the hotel where my money is and other valuable things were kept, i will like you to assist me with a loan urgently. I will be needing the sum of $2,500 to sort-out my hotel bills and get myself back home.I will appreciate whatever you can afford to help me with, i'll pay you back as soon as i return. Kindly let me know if you can be of help? so that i can send you the details.

Your reply will be greatly appreciated

Regards,

XXXXXX "

(signed with name of a local person)

It's a very clever con. Ignore this thief if you receive such an e mail message.

Bill Stewart
via e-mail

MORRISON

From Page 10

we'd have Santa Claus there. We would stand in line in the cold (outside) the courthouse. It was a big Gothic building four stories tall, tallest building in town. That's the Santa Claus I remember. My parents didn't make a lot of money. This was the (19)50s, and if my father was making $5,000 a year, he was doing good, but we still got toys.

Q: When did you find out there was no Santa?

A: I remember sitting in the kitchen on one of those little step stools that folds up. I remember sitting there and my father giving me The Talk—on sex, on there not being an Easter Bunny or a Santa Claus.

Q: All at once?

A: Yes. I was probably 10. That's basically the age at which you start questioning things.

Q: Is anyone too old for Santa?

A: There was a guy who was 84. He had his picture made in my lap every Saturday for four weeks. There's a movie theater where I am now, and one of the guys who works at the theater is developmentally disabled. He comes in every two or three days and has his picture made with me, and he gives me a list and asks for certain things. He'll come back the next day and want to know whether a certain toy is out, and he wants me to say hi to my "brother" ("Santa Clause" actor) Tim Allen. We talk, and then he goes to his job.

Q: What's the worst Santa you've ever seen?

A: I've seen some scraggly-looking Santa Clauses, let me tell you. Probably the worst was not in a Santa suit. We went to a lunch with some other Santas and this guy was telling me I should get into porn. He was the porn Santa Claus. And then he hit up my wife. I've been told he's no longer a Santa Claus.

Q: Will you ever hang up the "ho ho ho"?

A: I've been thinking about it. My wife's starting to get tired of the beard thing.

Morrison is a Los Angeles Times columnist and host of a daily public-affairs show on Los Angeles public radio. Morrison's e-mail address is patt.morrison@latimes.com.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Mostly cloudy with scattered showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲84° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°	▲86° ▼77°

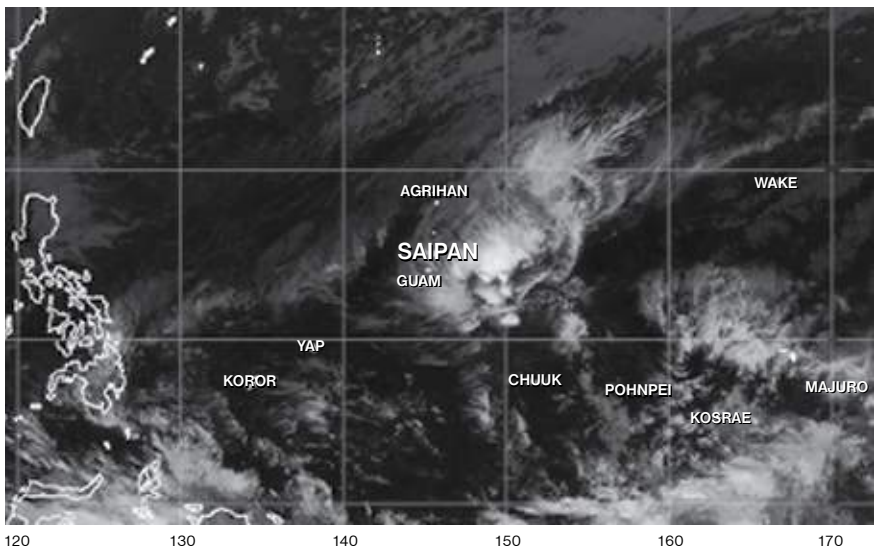
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Rain	▲82	▼77
Palau	Showers	▲87	▼77
Yap	Sunny	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88	▼77
Pohnpei	Showers	▲84	▼77
Kosrae	Sunny	▲88	▼76
Majuro	Showers	▲85	▼76

Around The Globe

Auckland	Showers	▲69	▼59
Beijing	Mostly Cloudy	▲36	▼18
Hong Kong	Showers	▲72	▼59
Honolulu	Sunny	▲80	▼68
London	Partly Sunny	▲41	▼36
Los Angeles	Sunny	▲62	▼44
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼73
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲96	▼74
Miami	Showers	▲78	▼68
New York	Mostly Sunny	▲31	▼26
Osaka	Showers	▲53	▼39
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲35	▼31
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲51	▼35
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	▲59	▼48
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲37	▼25
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲56	▼35
Seoul	Sunny	▲41	▼28
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	▲53	▼38
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	▲34	▼20

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00AM, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 22, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A shear line extends southwestward from 25N156E across the far Northern Mariana Islands to past 130E at 10N. Extensive cloudiness and patchy rain are found along and up to 200 miles northwest of this feature. A surface trough east of Guam extends southwestward from 21N154E to a weak circulation northwest of Chuuk near 9N149E. Scattered showers and a few thunderstorms are found within 200 miles of a line from 21N153E southwestward to 12N147E. A near-equatorial trough stretches east-northeastward from EQ130E to 3N144E then east-southeastward to end at EQ162E. Scattered showers are located southwest of Palau between the equator and 3N from 130E to 135E. Upper-level divergence is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms northwest of Kwajelein between 9N and 11N from 161E to 167E. A weak circulation is centered near 2N169E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are located between the equator and a line that runs from 1N160E to 5N170E. These showers are well south of Pohnpei, Kosrae and Majuro.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

5:35 AM	Today	Low Tide:	0.2 Feet
12:36 AM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet
7:08 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
11:36 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.4 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Thursday	6:40 AM	5:53 PM
Friday	6:40 AM	5:54 PM
Saturday	6:41 AM	5:54 PM
Sunday	6:41 AM	5:55 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:03 AM	11:10 PM
Thursday	10:38 AM	
Friday	12:14 AM	12:06 PM
Saturday	12:52 AM	12:55 PM
Sunday	1:34 AM	1:47 PM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF DECEMBER 22, 2009

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

C09597	11:30am	12:05pm	1, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM

C09597	12:40pm	1:10pm	1, 7

SAIPAN-GUAM

C09317	4:25am	5:15am	Daily
C09313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
C09597	11:30am	1:10pm	1, 7 via ROP
C09601	12:20pm	1:10pm	4, 5
C09603	3:15pm	4:05pm	Daily
C09605	6:20pm	7:10pm	Daily
C09599	9:20pm	10:10pm	Daily

SAIPAN-NAGOYA (NGO)

NW287	6:00am	7:30pm	Daily via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

NW287	6:00am	8:40am	Daily
NW297	4:45pm	7:30pm	Daily

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:20am	6:50am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ604	2:40am	6:30am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ119	4:00am	11:25am	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 6:40am, leave OSA 9:30am	
OZ606	3:20pm	7:00pm	2, 4, 6, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

FM844	2:50am	5:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

CZ3008	3:30am	6:40am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ604/701	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ604/701	2:40am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ604/703	2:50am	11:25am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ608/705	3:20am	1:30am+1	1, 5 via PUS
C09603/933	3:15pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09605/933	6:20pm	9:40pm	Daily via GUM
C09599/PR111	9:20pm	7:50am+1	1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG

OZ604/721	2:10am	12:00pm	1 via ICN
OZ604/721	2:40am	12:00pm	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
OZ606/749	3:20pm	11:00pm	4, 6, 7 via ICN

ARRIVALS

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

C09598	3:10am	3:45am	5, 6
C09312	1:20pm	1:55pm	6

GUAM-ROTA (ROP)

C09598	2:00am	2:30am	5, 6
C09312	12:10pm	12:40pm	6

GUAM-SAIPAN

C09316	2:00am	2:50am	1, 2, 3, 4, 7
C09598	2:00am	3:45am	5, 6 via ROP
C09596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
C09600	10:05am	10:55am	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7
C09312	12:10pm	1:55pm	6 via ROP
C09602	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 4, 5, 7
C09604	4:50pm	5:40pm	Daily
C09606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily

NAGOYA (NGO)-SAIPAN

NW288	12:05pm	1:20am+1	Daily via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

NW298	10:05am	2:50pm	Daily
NW288	8:45pm	1:20am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

OZ605	9:00am	2:20pm	2, 4, 6, 7
OZ120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	Daily via Osaka
		Arrive OSA 8:50pm, leave OSA 9:50pm	
OZ603	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

FM843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 5

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

CZ3007	7:30pm	2:40am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

OZ716/605	12:30am	2:20pm	4 via ICN
OZ706/607	3:35am	2:10am+1	4, 7 via PUS
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/603	1:10pm	1:30am+1 via ICN	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
PR110/C09596	10:10pm	7:50am+1 via GUM	1, 3, 5, 6, 7
C0934/9596	11:10pm	7:50am+1	Daily via GUM
OZ704/605	11:55pm	2:20pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via ICN

HONG KONG-SAIPAN

OZ724/605	12:30am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ750/605	1:00am	2:20pm	2,4,6,7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/603	1:30pm	1:30am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

HOW TO SUBMIT

- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
- Fax: (670) 235-3740
- Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
- Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

NEWS DESK For news tips, corrections and requests for news coverage, call (670) 235-NEWS (6397), 235-2440, fax 235,3740. E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com. Website:www.saipantribune.com.

CUSTOMER SERVICE For inquiries, purchase of back issues and complaints, call (670) 235-8747, 235-2440, fax 235-3740.

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ADVERTISING For inquiries contact (670) 235-2769. E-mail: sales@saipantribune.com

EMO warns of high surf until this evening

The Emergency Management Office is strongly advising the public to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches, at least until Wednesday evening, due to rip currents that are life threatening, especially those along north and west facing reefs.

Based on information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, moderate to fresh trade winds are expected today ahead of a trade-wind disturbance. The disturbance is expected to produce scattered showers in Marianas waters, primarily through Wednesday night. Combined seas of 8 feet will build to 9 feet and may reach 10 feet.

The high surf advisory is in effect until 6pm today, Dec. 23, along north facing and west facing reefs. A high surf advisory means that high surf will affect exposed reefs and beaches in the advisory area, producing dangerous rip currents.

EMO said there is a high risk of rip currents through Wednesday afternoon along north facing and west facing reefs.

"Expect hazardous surf increasing to 8 to 10 feet persisting through Wednesday," EMO said. ***(Saipan Tribune)***

NMC to hosts free information session

Those interested in furthering their education and advancing their professional careers are encouraged to attend the Northern Marianas College's free information session on Monday, Dec. 28, 2009, at Room D-1 at the College's As Terlaje campus, from 5:30pm to 7pm.

Faculty, staff, and students from the different degree and certificate programs, as well as counseling, financial aid, and admissions staff will be on hand to answer questions. Other current students will also be speaking about their experiences at NMC.

Individuals who attend the free information session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for the Spring and Summer 2010 semesters. This represents a savings of about $75 for either semester. Participants will also receive personal assistance in filling up application forms and financial aid documents.

NMC offers several degree and certificate programs, including a bachelor of science degree in elementary education, associate degrees in business, liberal arts, nursing, natural resource management, criminal justice, hospitality management, and more. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

The free information session is open to everyone, including graduating seniors and their parents, government and private sector employees, international students, and members of the general public who are interested in learning more about the programs at NMC. ***(NMC)***

Kiribati challenges region to address violence vs women

SUVA, Fiji—"There are international and regional discussions already underway on addressing violence against women; it is time Pacific Island leaders take up the issue nationally. Domestic violence is a real and serious national issue in Pacific countries. It is our challenge to deal with it."

Kiribati Member of Parliament and former president Teburoro Tito made this statement at the Pacific Regional Consultation for Members of Parliament hosted and organized by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community's Regional Rights Resource Team in Brisbane, Australia, during a discussion on challenges and strategies for responding to the high rates of gender-based violence in Pacific countries.

MPs from 11 countries around the Pacific are attending the meeting to discuss human rights issues in the Pacific, including violence against women, HIV, human rights and the law, human rights perspectives on climate change and human rights mechanisms.

Tito stated that campaigns by women activists in Kiribati, SPC/RRRT's advocacy on gender equality issues and notification about the regional parliamentarians human rights consultation prompted him to act on his intentions to garner support from the Kiribati Parliament to take a stand against gender-based violence, with particular focus on domestic violence in Kiribati. A motion he filed (Motion 20) calling for legislative measures to address domestic violence received bipartisan support in the Kiribati Parliament two weeks ago.

Although results of family health and safety studies in Kiribati and Solomon Islands show that rates of physical, sexual and psychological violence against women are amongst the highest in the world, there are inadequate laws and mechanisms to protect women from such violence. Another former President of Kiribati and current MP, Ieremia Tabai, said, 'Parliamentary discussions must now be concentrated on addressing violence in the home because all other violence can be looked after by other laws.'

Research also shows that where there are mechanisms to assist women in such situations, these do not adequately assist affected women given the limited resources allocated for such programs. Seventy percent of women who are subjected to intimate partner violence never tell anyone, and the few who talk about their experiences only do so when they are seriously injured or when they fear for their lives.

Papua New Guinea MP Malakai Tabar stated that a challenge that Pacific countries face is distorted and misconceived cultural and social norms that result in tolerance of violence against women. "Violence against women is wrong and unacceptable in our culture and it is our duty to remind ourselves and our youth of this," he said. In a strongly worded address, MP Tabar also stated that "it is very important that parliamentarians are made to understand and see that violence against women is their problem."

MP Pierre Lauofo of Samoa said that education—through media accessible to all citizens—is crucial in stopping violence against women. ***(SPC)***

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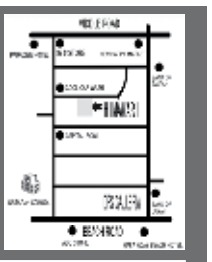

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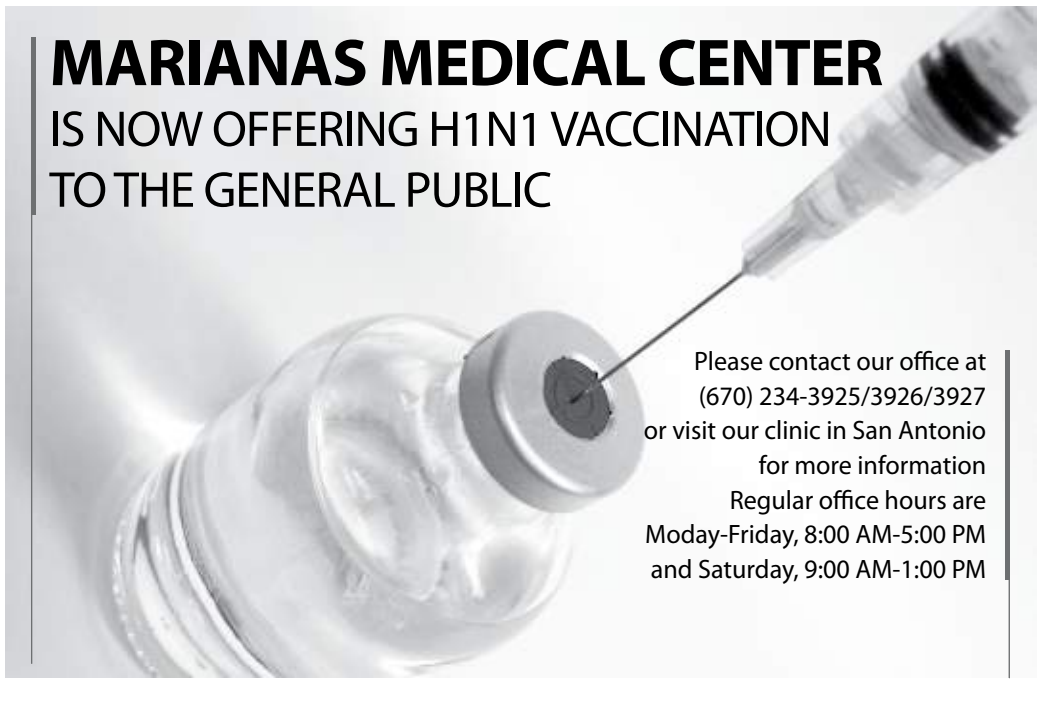


Please contact our office at
(670) 234-3925/3926/3927
or visit our clinic in San Antonio
for more information
Regular office hours are
Moday-Friday, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
and Saturday, 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

Island Snapshots

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ETC DONATION

Gree Air Conditioner, represented here by manager Larry Liao and sales supervisor Jyt Ramos, presents a $500 educational tax credit donation to Marianas High School principal Karen Borja.

BRAD E. RUSZALA

NEW PHONE BOOK

Yellow Pages Ink executive regional director commercial Julian Cooper-Nurse presents Gov. Benigno Fitial and Lt. Eloy Inos with the first 2010 CNMI Phone Books yesterday morning in the Executive Conference Room on Capital Hill. Also present for the occasion were YPI Business sales manager JayR Dominguez and YPI Business Account manager Julie Manglona.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

SECURITY TRAINING

President Dr. Carmen Fernandez of the Northern Marianas College addresses faculty and staff at the recent Campus Safety Security Training. The training, which is the first of a series of comprehensive trainings, aims to inform the college's faculty and staff about certain safety measures. Also, the main goal of the training was to supply faculty and staff with realistic, proactive safety techniques that will enable them to better protect themselves, students and fellow employees.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUT

Happy 2nd birthday to Jameela Leiann Pua Mingefiiy! May God bless you on this very special day and we wish you many more birthdays to come. We love you! Greetings come from your mom Jaime, Nathan, Parveen, grandma, grandpa and the rest of the family.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-10-009

Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC), is soliciting sealed bids from qualified contractors or firms for the Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

A mandatory site visit and pre-bid meeting is scheduled for December 16, 2009 at 10:OO AM, local time at CUC Power Plant 1 Administration Building, Lower Base, Saipan, to ensure that the contractors are fully aware of the work involved and familiarize with the site conditions. All proposers are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the proposers due to lack of information or understanding of the plant site conditions in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid or performance of work under the contract.

One (1) original and five (5) copies must be submitted in a sealed envelope marked **"IFB 10 - 009 – Construction of a New Secondary Containment at Power Plant 1, Saipan"** to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, Room No.4, 3rd Floor Joeten Dandan, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **Wednesday, December 30, 2009 at IOAM.,** (CST) local time, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.

A bid guarantee of 15 percent of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The security deposit may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury. A performance and payment bond of hundred (100%) percent each of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety for proposal security. No advance payment will be authorized on the project or an Irrevocable Letter of Credit (100% aggregate contract cost/CUC Beneficiary) or a payment bond. All insurers questions, concerns and qualification should handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Tide 4, Division 7). A Clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.

The bidder is required to submit a copy of his CNMI Business license in compliance with the Contractor's Registration and Licensing Laws of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, upon award of the contract. The Contractor and all subcontractors will be obligated to pay wage rates not less that the current CNMI minimum wage, prevailing through the period of contract, as indicated in the web page - http://www.dol.gov/esa/minwage/cnmi/cnmi.htm. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

The Scope-of-Work and Bid package will be **e-mailed**, upon request, to all interested bidders, by the CUC, Procurement & Supply Office, during working days, from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 PM, local time, **until December 23, 2009**. Contractors are advised that the work will be carried out as a part of CUC response actions under the consent decree noted as Stipulated Order No. 2 (SO 2).

All inquiries must be submitted in writing no later than **10:OO AM local time on Thursday, December 24,2009**, to Mr. Manuel B. Sablan, Jr., Procurement & Supply Manager via email at **msablan@cucgov.net** and Mr. Venugopal Prabhakara, Power Generation Managing Engineer via email at **venu@cucgov.net** with a copy to Ms. Becky Grimes at **beckyg@cucgov.net**.

Selection procedure shall be in full compliance with CUC Procurement Regulations. CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids and waive any imperfection in the bid proposal in the interest of the government.

/s/ TIMOTHY M. CONNOR
CUC Legal Counsel

/s/ ABE UTU MALAE
Assistant Executive Director for Operation

/s/ ANTONIO S. MUNA
Executive Director

Vacancy Announcement
Program Officer
Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities

The Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities (Council) is soliciting applications for the position of Program Officer. The Program Officer is responsible for developing and implementing a variety of humanities programs and events and coordinating the Council's Community Grants program under the supervision of the Council's executive director and board of directors. A detailed description of the Program Officer's duties may be obtained from the Council's office in Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai or from the Council's website at www.nmihumanities.org.

Applicants for this position must possess: (1). strong analytic, writing and communication skills; (2). knowledge of grants writing and grants administration; (3). the ability to work effectively with people from diverse backgrounds; (4). a working knowledge of NMI history and of current political, social and economic issues confronting the local community; (5). basic computer skills including knowledge of MS Excel, Word and PowerPoint; and (6). the ability to articulate the Council's mission to a wide range of audiences.

Applicants must have a bachelor's degree (B.A. or B.S.) in a humanities discipline from an accredited postsecondary institution. The salary range is from $35,000 to $40,000 depending on qualifications and experience. Benefits are set forth in the NMICH Personnel Policy Manual.

Interested individuals are invited to send a letter of interest, a detailed résumé and the names and addresses of three references to Scott Russell, Executive Director, Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities, Box 506407, Saipan, MP 96950. Applications must be received by Council staff on or before 4:00 p.m. on Friday, 22 January 2010. Those wishing more information about this position may contact Council staff at 235-4785.

The Northern Mariana Islands Council for the Humanities is an equal opportunity employer.

Business

Recovery on track to strengthen at end of 2009

WASHINGTON (AP)—The economy started the year in free-fall but is on track to end 2009 on stronger footing.

After a record four straight quarters of declines, the economy returned to growth in the July-to-September period. The government is expected to estimate the economy expanded at a 2.8 percent pace in the third quarter when it releases its final projection of last quarter's growth on Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. EST.

And many analysts think the economy appears headed for an even better finish in the current quarter.

The economy is probably growing at nearly 4 percent in the October-to-December quarter, analysts say. If they're right, that would mark the strongest showing since 5.4 percent growth in the first quarter of 2006—well before the recession began. The government will release its first estimate of fourth-quarter economic activity on Jan. 29.

"The economy started 2009 with a whimper, but it is going to end it with a bang," economists Paul Ashworth and Paul Dales of Capital Economics predict.

Yet even such growth wouldn't be enough to quickly drive down the unemployment rate, now at 10 percent. High unemployment and tight credit for both consumers and businesses are expected to continue to weigh on the economic recovery. Many economists predict the economy's growth will slow to a pace of around 2 or 3 percent in the first three months of 2010.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

GM taps Microsoft CFO to run finances

DETROIT (AP)—General Motors Co. has hired the chief financial officer of Microsoft Corp. to take over the troubled automaker's books, tapping a cost-cutter who is now widely seen as a potential candidate to be GM's next CEO. Chris Liddell will become GM's finance chief starting next year and report directly to interim CEO Ed Whitacre Jr., who also is a newcomer to the automaker. The 51-year-old Liddell is the first permanent top manager hired from outside the company since it left bankruptcy protection in July. Whitacre, who says he wants to shake up GM's slow and rigid culture, has pushed out top executives and promoted younger managers in recent weeks. GM's announcement Monday of Liddell's appointment led several industry analysts to say he may be trying out to take the permanent CEO position, perhaps as early as next year. The hiring also shows that GM can attract top talent despite its uncertain future and pay limits imposed by its majority stockholder, the U.S. government.

Gov't imposes 3-hour limit on tarmac strandings

WASHINGTON (AP)—Stinky toilets, crying babies, airless cabins—the Obama administration said Monday passengers don't have to take it any more. It ordered airlines to let people get off planes delayed on the ground after three hours. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood said the three-hour limit and other new regulations are meant to send an unequivocal message to airlines not to hold passengers hostage on stuck planes. Coming on the eve of the busy holiday travel season, the announcement was hailed by consumer advocates as "a Christmas miracle." The airline industry said it will comply with the regulations—which go into effect in 120 days—but predicted the result will be more canceled flights, more inconvenience for passengers.

Hedge fund operator Rajaratnam pleads not guilty

NEW YORK (AP)—Wealthy hedge fund operator Raj Rajaratnam and a codefendant pleaded not guilty Monday to charges they were major players in a scheme that used inside information to make stock trades that generated millions of dollars in profits. Prosecutors, who have described the case as a "wake up call for Wall Street," promised to hand over to defense attorneys 100 hours of intercepted phone calls made over eight months that they say implicate the defendants. Rajaratnam and Danielle Chiesi entered their pleas before U.S. District Judge Richard Holwell in Manhattan to an indictment returned last week in a $52 million insider trading case that has resulted in charges against 21 people.

Banks getting bum rap on not lending enough?

NEW YORK (AP)—Unlike big-city bankers, Stan Wilmoth didn't make lots of dumb loans during the boom. After the crash, he accepted not a dime of taxpayer money for his bank. His salary? "Substantially less" than the $1 million the former head of Merrill Lynch spent remodeling his office, he says. He credits his grandfather, a Protestant minister, with giving him "moral fiber."

But judging from the rhetoric coming out of the Obama administration, Wilmoth, the folksy 58-year-old president of Heritage Bank of Reno, Nev., should be scorned, not praised.

His sin? He's shirking his patriotic duty by not lending enough money to his community.

It's easy to hate bankers right now, but is it possible that on the issue of lending they're getting a bum rap? After all, it's not just "fat cats" with multimillion-dollar bonuses who aren't lending much money. It's small fry like Wilmoth, too. His bank, owned by 352 Nevada families, has just $393 million in assets versus $2.3 trillion at Bank of America.

COMMONWEALTH ZONING BOARD

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

To Participate in Zoning Office's Island-Wide Junk Car Removal & Recycling Program

The Zoning Office is interested in receiving Expressions of Interest for the removal of junk vehicles by qualified towing and recycling operations. Responding companies must be willing to pick up any and all junk vehicles identified and processed by the Zoning Office at no charge to the CNMI government. It is estimated that there are as many as 18,000 junk vehicles on the island of Saipan.

All companies wishing to register for this program must have a valid recycling permit from the CNMI Division of Environmental Quality.

Please include in your Expression of Interest a description of your firm's operations, permits and number of vehicles that can be taken per month. Interested companies need to be willing to take large and small vehicles in any condition.

The Zoning Office will take every qualified company that submits an Expression of Interest, but reserves the right not to select any of the responding companies for the program. The Zoning Office will publish the approved list of the selected company or companies and advise the public of the start of the program, which is anticipated to begin in January. The Zoning Office will provide an equal number of vehicles to each approved company on a rotating schedule to be determined.

Submissions should be clearly marked "Expression of Interest – Junk Car Removal"

Format of submission

- On 8 1/2" x 11" on company letterhead
- One electronic file version in PDF, MS Word or MS PowerPoint format, by email to staff@zoning.gov.mp (use subject line: "Junk Vehicle Program")

Where and when to submit and questions

Address your questions, the Expression of Interest and other correspondence to:

Hand Delivery: Zoning Office, 2nd floor, Joeten Building, DanDan, Saipan
US Mail: Zoning Office, Caller Box 10007, Saipan, MP 96950
E-mail: staff@zoning.gov.mp

Attn: Junk Vehicle Program.

Proposals must be received at the Zoning Office by 3:00 pm, Friday, January 4th , 2010.

/s/ Herminia M. Fusco, Chair

Invitation to Bid ITB10-GOV-035

Security Services for Water Task Force Drill Rig

Governor Benigno R. Fitial and Lt. Governor Eloy S. Inos, through the Water Task Force, are soliciting sealed Bids for Security Services for the Water Task Force Drill Rig on Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project Scope of Work will be available at the Office of the Director, Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, on or after **December 23, 2009.**

A mandatory Pre-Bid Conference is scheduled for **10:00 a.m.** local time, **January 11, 2010**, at the CNMI Water **Task Force Conference Room, 1316 Anatahan Dr., Capitol Hill, Saipan.**

All questions regarding this ITB must be submitted in writing no later than **4:30 pm, January 8, 2010,** to Mr. Pedro Sasamoto, WTF Program Manager, facsimile number (670) 664-2279.

Bids must be sealed and marked **"ITB10-GOV-035"**. For bidders within the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, **January 22, 2010.** Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bid by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than **3:00 p.m.** local time, **January 22, 2010,** and may be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515. For bidders located outside the CNMI, one (1) original and four (4) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than **January 22, 2010,** and must be received no later than **February 4, 2010.** Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be opened at the Office of Procurement and Supply on **February 4, 2010** if bids are receive from outside the CNMI or on **January 25, 2010** if all bids are from within the CNMI.

The bid procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations. Preference is not available to local bidders in this procurement because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funds for this project.

The CNMI reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfections in any bid if to do so will be in the best interest of the CNMI. All bids shall become the property of the CNMI government.

BENIGNO R. FITIAL
Governor

HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, Procurement & Supply

Nation

Abortion deal may be hard to keep in health bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Twice now, abortion was almost a dealbreaker. This time, it was a dealmaker. But of hundreds of deals cut so health care legislation can stay alive, the hardest to keep may be the Senate's abortion compromise—achieved after 13 hours of negotiation. The volatile issue remains the biggest threat to getting a history-making bill to President Barack Obama.

Deals are the lifeblood of legislation. Mary Landrieu of Louisiana got $100 million more for her state, Connecticut's Joe Lieberman stripped the bill of a government insurance plan and Ben Nelson won a slew of favors for Nebraska—all in exchange for their votes.

Nelson was also pivotal in the abortion compromise. The abortion-rights foe cast the 60th vote Monday to prevent Republicans from burying the bill.

Abortion is an issue that doesn't usually lead to common ground, since interested groups have radically opposed views. That makes the Senate compromise—which seeks to prohibit the use of tax dollars for abortions—rare, even surprising. It's also why, as Senate Democrats move to negotiations with the House, other deals in their bill may stick more easily.

House liberals are starting to accept that they probably won't get a government insurance plan. But abortion opponents in the House nearly stopped health care once before, and they are poised to try again to preserve their more restrictive approach. It could be a dealbreaker.

Sen. Barbara Boxer, D-Calif., represented abortion rights supporters in the negotiations only to face criticism from women's rights groups, not just abortion opponents. Now, Boxer is urging lawmakers to take a second look. "You have both sides criticizing it, which means what we did what we had to do, we compromised in a fair way," Boxer said.

Hours before the Senate's abortion compromise came together last Friday, it looked like things would fall apart. Three Democratic officials familiar with the talks detailed how events unfolded. They spoke on condition of anonymity, because the talks were private.

Obama's health care remake extends coverage to 94 percent of Americans, not including illegal immigrants, and tries to slow increases in medical costs. But in the Senate, Nebraska's Nelson stood in the way. Among his chief objections was his belief that the Senate's restrictions on government funding for abortion were too lax.

The negotiations began at 9:30 a.m. Friday in a suite of offices in the Capitol occupied by Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev. Steps from the Senate floor, Reid's spacious lair is shielded from inquisitive media. There would be suspense, shuttle diplomacy, hugs, and a call from Obama aboard Air Force One before the day was done.

Among those taking part were Reid, Nelson, Boxer, Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., and White House deputy chief of staff Jim Messina. Nelson and Boxer did not negotiate face-to-face but set up camp in different offices. Schumer, the No. 3 Senate Democrat, shuttled back and forth.

By the middle of the day, Nelson's home-state concerns had been addressed, and the focus turned to abortion. Federal law bans taxpayer funding of abortion, except in cases of rape, incest or to save the life of the mother.

AP

Sen. Ben Nelson, D-Neb., talks to reporters following a 60-40 cloture vote which is the first step on passing a health care bill on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, Dec. 21, 2009.

Obama praises health care bill as it nears passage

WASHINGTON (AP)—Well on the way to winning passage before Christmas after clearing its biggest hurdle in the wee hours of the morning, the Senate's health care bill will make a "tremendous difference for families, for seniors, for businesses and for the country as a whole," President Barack Obama said Monday.

Obama

Senate Democratic leaders basked in the victory for the landmark legislation that will insure 30 million more Americans. They looked ahead to the next make-or-break vote Tuesday morning. They snapped up a coveted endorsement from the American Medical Association and batted down Republican complaints about special deals lawmakers got in the bill.

"I don't know if there's a senator that doesn't have something in this bill that was important to them, and if they don't have something in it important to them, then it doesn't speak well of them," retorted Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., when questioned at a press conference about the GOP criticism.

The deals in the massive bill range from $100 million to pay the full cost of a Medicaid expansion in Nebraska, home to Democratic Sen. Ben Nelson, the crucial 60th vote for the bill, to exempting roughly 800,000 seniors in Florida from potential benefit cuts by private Medicare Advantage plans, something sought by Sen. Bill Nelson, D-Fla.

The American Medical Association got some special deals itself before declaring its support. A 5 percent tax on elective cosmetic surgery procedures was replaced with a 10 percent tax on indoor tanning services; a proposed fee on physicians to enroll in Medicare was dropped; and payment cuts to specialty and other physicians to pay for bonuses to primary care doctors in underserved areas were also eliminated, the AMA's president-elect, Dr. Cecil B. Wilson, said.

White House picks new cyber coordinator

WASHINGTON (AP)—After months of wrangling and delays, President Barack Obama has chosen a national cyber security coordinator to take on the formidable task of organizing and managing the nation's increasingly vulnerable digital networks.

Obama has tapped Howard A. Schmidt, longtime computer security executive who worked in the Bush administration and has extensive ties to the corporate world, according to a senior White House official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the announcement will not be made until Tuesday.

Schmidt's selection comes more than 10 months after Obama declared cyber security a priority and ordered a broad administration review.

The official said Obama was personally involved in the selection process and chose Schmidt after an extensive search because of his unique background and skills. Schmidt will have regular and direct access to the President for cybersecurity issues, the official said.

Obama released the findings of the cyber security review nearly seven months ago, vowing that the White House will name a cyber coordinator to deal with one of the "most serious economic and national security challenges we face as a nation."

Corporate computer security leaders have openly expressed frustration with the White House as movement on the job post stalled and questioned the administration's claims that the issue is a priority.

At the same time, cyber experts and potential job candidates have complained that the position lacks the budgetary and policy making authority needed to be successful. Schmidt will report to the National Security Council and closely support the National Economic Council on cyber issues.

"From the industry's perspective, a lot of people are starting to think that other pressing matters in Afghanistan and other issues put this on a back burner," said Roger Thornton, chief technology officer for Fortify Software, and a cyber security expert. "If it is, that's understandable but depressing."

3 friends sentenced in NH Walmart worker slaying

NORTH HAVERHILL, N.H. (AP)—Denounced as "evil" and "despicable," three young friends who plotted the killing of a developmentally disabled Walmart cashier who had been hitting on a co-worker drew long prison terms Monday.

Timothy Smith, Anthony Howe and Amber Talbot, who pleaded guilty to murder and conspiracy in the October 2008 death of 25-year-old Christopher Gray, sat at adjoining tables in court as the victim's family members tearfully remembered him and berated his killers.

"Just remember that night," said David Kemp, 33, Gray's brother. "I hope it eats you and eats you and eats you until can't take it (any) longer."

Smith and Howe each got 40 years to life and Talbot 25 to 50 years for taking the Groton, Vt., man to a mobile home under the pretext of watching movies. There, Smith, 24, and Howe, 19, who are cousins, stabbed and strangled him as they stood around a campfire.

Gray, an aspiring auto mechanic whose buoyant personality helped him overcome a low IQ, attention deficit disorder and a speech impediment, became a target after wooing Talbot, 18, who also worked at the Woodsville Walmart.

Her boyfriend, Michael Robie, 19, became enraged when he heard about it and plotted revenge, enlisting the other three from his cell. Robie, who was heard discussing the attack in tape-recorded telephone calls from jail, has pleaded guilty to assault and conspiracy.

He is awaiting sentencing.

On the night Gray went missing, Walmart surveillance video showed the three picking him up after work at the Woodsville store, before they drove to Talbot's home. "He was only there because he wanted you to be his friend," his father, Michael Gray, told them Monday.

ACROSS THE NATION

Roberts remembered as charismatic leader

TULSA, Okla. (AP)—Roberts' namesake university in south Tulsa, about 4,000 people—some who waited hours in their cars for the doors to open—packed a campus arena to pay final tribute to the charismatic leader who rose from poverty and humble tent revivals to build a multimillion-dollar ministry so enormous that it had its own ZIP code. Roberts died last week of complications from pneumonia in Newport Beach, Calif. He was 91. "You sent us a man who we know and loved, and who walked with God and never gave up the common touch," fellow TV evangelist Pat Robertson said during the ceremony's opening prayer. "I know you broke the mold with Oral." The event was part spectacle, carried live by the Inspiration Network and its international counterpart, which can reach about 140 million homes.

Police arrest adult in NJ child shooting death

PATERSON, N.J. (AP)—Police have arrested a 23-year-old man they say left an illegal, loaded handgun in the bedroom he shared with a 5-year-old child. The child was accidentally shot and killed by a 6-year-old relative after the two boys discovered the gun while playing. Jalik Jones was charged Monday with reckless manslaughter and firearms violations. Five-year-old Daron Mayes was shot in the back of the head around 8:20 p.m. Sunday in his Paterson home. Chief Assistant Passaic County Prosecutor John Latoracca says the 6-year-old was playing with Mayes when the pair found the gun. Authorities have not specified how Jones was related to the boys.

2nd baby beluga born at Chicago aquarium in a week

CHICAGO (AP)—Chicago's Shedd Aquarium has welcomed a new baby beluga whale for the second time in a week. The aquarium announced Monday that beluga whale Naya (NY'-ah) gave birth Sunday afternoon to a 5-foot, 6-inch male calf that weighs 152 pounds. Beluga whale Puiji (poo-EE-jee) had given birth to a male baby last week that weighed in at 162 pounds and was 5-feet, 4-inches long. Shedd senior vice president Ken Ramirez says Naya needed some assistance during her birth. He says the newborn and his mother were briefly separated for observation but are now reunited. He says the Shedd remains "cautiously optimistic" as officials watch for the pair to bond and nurse. The calf's father is Naluark, who also sired the baby born to Puiji last week.

Asia

Most of 47,000 Filipinos safe from raging volcano

LEGAZPI, Philippines (AP)—Almost all of the 47,000 residents living on the slopes of a rumbling volcano in the central Philippines have moved to emergency shelters, and lava and earthquakes Tuesday heralded what officials say could be a major eruption.

Low clouds obscured visibility of the smoldering 8,070-foot (2,460-meter) Mayon, towering over coconut farms and rice paddies in coastal Albay province.

"Hazardous eruption ... can happen today or in the next few days," said chief state volcanologist Renato Solidum, adding that an eruption also may not happen. "Nobody has a 100 percent accuracy."

Ash columns were seen rising during a cloud break and Solidum said his team recorded 1,266 volcanic quakes in the last 24 hours, down from nearly 2,000 the previous day. He said that while the quakes were fewer, they were larger.

The emission of sulfur dioxide—an indication of magma rising inside the volcano—was measured at 6,530 tons per day, slightly less than 7,000 tons on Sunday, but still very high, Solidum said. The normal gas emission is 500 tons per day.

AP

Residents living within the 8-kilometer danger zone of Mayon volcano, background, are evacuated to safer grounds in Guinobatan township, Albay province, about 500 kilometers southeast of Manila Monday Dec. 21, 2009 in the Philippines.

"Technically, Mayon volcano is already erupting because lava has oozed out," said Mahar Lagmay, professor of geological studies at the University of the Philippines. A bigger, explosive eruption is still possible but hard to predict, he said.

2 Koreas to open modernized military hot lines

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North and South Korea plan to open modernized military hot lines next week to help facilitate border crossings by officials and workers from the South to a joint industrial complex in the North, an official said Tuesday.

The announcement came a day after the North threatened South Korean ships with possible attacks.

The hot lines serve as a key mode of direct communication between military officials from the two Koreas, which technically remain at war because the 1950-53 Korean War ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.

The divided countries have nearly finished connecting fiber-optic cables across their heavily fortified border and will test the nine communication channels later this week before formally opening them next week, South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Chun Hae-sung said.

The move comes two months after the South provided the North with communication equipment and other materials to help its communist neighbor modernize the hot lines.

The fiber-optic cables will be laid near nine outdated copper cable hot lines, some of which the North cut off in 2008, citing technical problems, before restoring them, according to the ministry.

The communication lines are likely to "improve convenience of our people's border crossings," allowing the two Koreas to exchange information quickly and efficiently, Chun told reporters.

ASIAN BRIEFS

New charges against Philippine massacre suspect

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Government prosecutors filed 16 more murder charges Monday against the member of a powerful clan who allegedly led last month's massacre of political rivals and journalists in the southern Philippines. At least 57 people were brutally killed with guns and machetes, many of their bodies buried by backhoe, on Nov. 23 in southern Maguidanao province. One body remains unidentified, preventing an indictment, but Andal Ampatuan Jr., a town mayor, has now been charged with the other 56, senior state prosecutor Leo Decera III said. Among those killed were 30 journalists and their staff in what is considered the deadliest single attack ever on media workers. The carnage has sparked international outrage, prompting President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo to briefly impose martial law in Maguindanao that she said was needed to crack down on the powerful Ampatuan clan, a key political ally.

Chinese man gets 12 years for killing rare tiger

BEIJING (AP)—A court has sentenced a man to 12 years in jail for killing a rare tiger in southwestern China. The official Xinhua News Agency said Tuesday the court in Xishuangbanna in Yunnan province also ordered Kang Wannian to pay a fine of 100,000 yuan ($14,600), plus 480,000 yuan for state economic losses. Kang said he shot the animal after dark and did not know it was an endangered Indochinese tiger. The incident took place last February, and Kang surrendered to police in June. Around 1,300-1,800 Indochinese tigers are estimated to be living in the wild.

Deported Uighurs told UN of fears of China return

BEIJING (AP)—Ethnic Uighur asylum-seekers forcibly repatriated over the weekend had warned the U.N. refugee agency they feared long jail terms or even the death penalty if they were sent back to China, according to statements seen Monday by The Associated Press. The 20 Uighur Muslims had fled to Cambodia in search of asylum after witnessing and documenting violent ethnic riots in the restive western Chinese region of Xinjiang this summer that left nearly 200 dead. They were put on a plane from Phnom Penh to Beijing on Saturday under heavy pressure from China, despite strong protests from the U.S. and the United Nations. China has called the Uighurs suspected criminals, and on Monday defended the forced returns, saying it was in line with immigration law.

World

Europe feels left out in cold on climate deal

LONDON (AP)—It's a climate deal that has Europe feeling left out in the cold.

The continent that used to take the lead in advocating climate action is now taking the lead in climate complaining. And it's not just upset with the results, but the process itself.

Europe's goals were generally not met, and Danish Prime Minister Lars Loekke Rasmussen, host of the U.N.-sponsored climate talks in Copenhagen, was shoved aside as president of the conference in favor of Philip Weech of the Bahamas.

When a deal was reached, those in the room were heads of state from Africa, North and South America and Asia—not Europe.

The unhappiness extends to Europe's business community, which worries that a failure to agree to international emissions cuts could put them at a competitive disadvantage.

Since Europe had already agreed to binding emission cuts, "they needed the United States and developing countries to agree to binding reductions, which they didn't because the United States couldn't without the United States Congress acting," said Fred Krupp, president of the Environmental Defense Fund in the U.S. The developing countries didn't agree because the U.S. didn't, he added.

The Copenhagen Accord emerged principally from President Barack Obama's meeting with Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao and the leaders of India, Brazil and South Africa. But the agreement was protested by several nations that demanded deeper emissions cuts by the industrialized world.

The U.S.-brokered compromise calls for reducing emissions to keep temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 degrees Fahrenheit) above preindustrial levels.

The agreement's key elements, with no legal obligation, were that richer nations will finance a $10 billion-a-year, three-year program to fund poorer nations' projects to deal with drought and other impacts of climate change, and to develop clean energy. A goal was also set to mobilize $100 billion a year by 2020 for the same adaptation and mitigation purposes.

The nations attending the U.N. conference agreed by consensus on a compromise to "take note" of the accord, instead of formally approving it.

Prisoner swap talks enter critical phase in Israel

JERUSALEM (AP)—Marathon top-level Israeli meetings ended early Tuesday without announcement of a decision over whether to accept Islamic militants' demand to swap 1,000 Palestinian prisoners for a lone Israeli serviceman.

A decision to pay that lopsided price for 23-year-old Sgt. Gilad Schalit could reshuffle Mideast politics in unpredictable ways and possibly ease a punishing blockade of the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip.

Netanyahu and six Cabinet ministers convened after nightfall Monday, the latest in a series of sessions over the past two days in a frenzy of activity that suggested a deal could be close.

The group was divided, however, with some ministers opposed freeing Palestinians convicted in fatal attacks, arguing they could kill again.

After more than four hours of talks, Netanyahu's office released a statement early Tuesday saying only that instructions were given to the negotiating team about "the continuation of efforts to bring Gilad Schalit home safe and sound." There was no word of a decision, further meetings or steps.

As the Monday evening meeting began, Netanyahu's office issued a statement saying, "The prime minister will continue to protect Israel's security and the lives of its citizens as the most important factor" in a decision over the soldier, a possible hint that he was leaning against approval of the deal.

Report: Guinea massacre 'crime against humanity'

UNITED NATIONS (AP)—U.N. investigators say there is sufficient reason to believe that Guinea's wounded junta leader is directly responsible for the mass killings and rapes of protesters in September, which they consider crimes against humanity, a U.N. diplomat said Monday.

The U.N. investigators also concluded that there are reasonable grounds to suspect that junta leader Capt. Moussa 'Dadis' Camara, the army officer who shot him in a dispute Dec. 3, and Guinea's anti-drug chief bear "individual criminal responsibility" for the events of Sept. 28 and the following days, the diplomat said.

The 60-page report, in French, was transmitted to the U.N. Security Council, Guinea's government, the African Union and the Economic Community of West African States this weekend. Its contents were first reported by Le Monde, the French daily newspaper.

On Sept. 28, soldiers loyal to Camara sealed off the exits to the national soccer stadium where tens of thousands of protesters had gathered to demand an end to military rule. Troops entered and fired their assault rifles, spraying bullets into the unarmed crowd, survivors have said.

WORLD BRIEFS

Iran cleric's funeral becomes opposition protest

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—A huge funeral procession for Iran's most senior dissident cleric became a show of defiance against the country's rulers Monday as mourners flashed green protest colors and chanted against the Islamic leadership in Iran's holy city of Qom. The response by authorities was not as punishing as in recent demonstrations—an apparent attempt to avoid bloodshed and chaos during the cortege for one of the patriarchs of the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the one-time heir to lead the country. But the major outpouring for Grand Ayatollah Hossein Ali Montazeri by opposition supporters could signal a restive week ahead. Tens of thousands of demonstrators, if not more, filled the main boulevards in Qom, the hub of Islamic scholarship and study in mostly Shiite Iran.

Dutch police seek to explain young sailor's trip

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP)—Her dream of becoming the youngest person to sail solo around the world shattered and under scrutiny over her quest, Dutch teenager Laura Dekker ran away from home—to the Caribbean 5,000 miles away. Two days after she was reported missing, police managed to track the 14-year-old girl down on the island of St. Maarten. Police and child care authorities were working Monday to uncover how exactly Laura got there and why she fled, as a family spokeswoman speculated that the pressure of a court battle over the attempt had gotten to her. St. Maarten police spokesman Ricardo Henson said Dekker arrived on the island Thursday from Paris.

Campus Life

NMC students' presentations take you there

Students of the Northern Marianas College's School of Education recently presented at an open house their class projects that featured unit lesson plans on topics of their choices and simulations of learning centers created to reinforce the lessons being taught. Class instructor Barbara Merfalen expressed enthusiasm in seeing the creativity and ambition of her students.

"I really enjoyed the efforts our teachers-in-training put into producing such organized, practical, and meaningful presentations," said Merfalen. "Each presentation exceeded the expectations I laid out when I first assigned the project."

The presentations were part of Merfalen's Integrated Planning & Programs class, which calls for students to fuse thematic instruction and unit planning.

"One concept I wanted my students to incorporate into their learning centers was the Being There Experience, which allows students to participate actively and become involved," added Merfalen.

To achieve this experience, several students set up equipment and media for observers. One student's "On the Drums" learning center featured a complete drum set for an activity and another student's "In the Ocean" center treated observers to sights and sounds of the ocean as well as a pair of scuba flippers. Yet another student set up handcrafted items at her "Tree of Life" display, which showcased the beauty and utility of the coconut tree.

Upon assigning the project, Merfalen had also stressed to her students the importance of being aware of the multiple intelligences, a theory that divides human potential into eight aspects of intelligence. These aspects include linguistic, logical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalistic intelligences.

NMC

Patrick Alepuyo's "In the Ocean" center treated observers to sights and sounds of the ocean.

NMC

Shawna Chong's "On the Drums" learning center featured a complete drum set.

Kimberly Palacios' "Tree of Life" featured handcrafted items that showcased the beauty and utility of the coconut tree.

NMC

"We are extremely pleased with the ingenuity and thought these students put into their projects," said NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez. "I am confident in their skills and look forward to their future achievements."

The learning centers were evaluated on the information presented, directions and procedures given, organization of materials, activities provided, and its overall appearance. The unit lesson maps consisted of daily lesson plans spanning a two-week period, accommodations for students with disabilities, and descriptions of general adaptations. ***(PR)***

82 parents complete MR/FR Fall 2009 schedule

Ten Head Start village centers completed the Fall 2009 Motheread/Fatheread adult course, with a total of 82 parents completing the training.

The series of trainings started on Sept. 28, 2009 in the CNMI Head Start centers, with originally 110 parents signing up for the training.

With the 82 participants completing the course, this translates to a 19-percent increase over last year's number of participants that completed the course.

"The increase shows that parent participants for this cycle wanted to be more involved in the educational well-being of their children by actively participating in school literacy activities," said Bryan Manabat, Motheread certified trainer.

The program also noted an increase in the number of fathers who are involving themselves in early childhood literacy activities in the Head Start program.

The Motheread/Fatheread Program adult course addresses three major activities defining family literacy in the Head Start Program. (1) Parent and child interactive literacy services; (2) Training for parents as the primary teachers of their children, (3) Age appropriate educational activities for children that prepares them for success in school.

In the adult classes, participants learned to be story readers, writers, and tellers in a group structure that supports their own sense of worth and ability. The adult curriculum is composed of 29 lessons that address child and family development themes. Materials used to teach these lessons are multiple copies of selected children's literature.

The eight-week, once-a-week course help parents become familiar with many ways of using stories in books to improve children's academic skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing, comprehension, and critical thinking. The Motheread/Fatheread adult course also enables parent participants to effectively use the power of stories to increase children's interest in asking questions, create early positive experiences with books, become reading role models for their children, help them value and establish reading as a prime family activity. ***(PR)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Motheread/Fatheread trainer Mary Lyn Ogo shows off some of the books and materials they use for the training at the Sinapalo Head Start Center. The last session was held Dec. 7, 2009.

Upcoming Motheread/ Fatheread course schedule

- Jan. 11 (Mondays, 6pm): Tanapag and GTC Elementary School.
- Jan. 12 (Tuesdays, 6pm): Kagman Elementary School.
- Jan. 13 (Wednesdays, 6pm): WSR, San Vicente, Dandan Elementary School.
- Jan. 14 (Thursdays, 5pm): Oleai Elementary School; (Thursdays, 6pm) San Antonio, Koblerville, and Tinian Elementary Schools.
- Jan. 16 (Saturdays, 9am, 6pm): Garapan and Tinian elementary schools.
- Jan. 14 and 16 (Thursdays and Saturdays, 6pm): Tinian Elementary School

The Motheread® Program is a nationally acclaimed family literacy program sponsored by the NMI Council of the Humanities in partnership with Joeten-Kiyu Public Library, Public School System, and other generous donors. For more information contact tel. (670) 235-7319, or cell 287-9416 or e-mail cnmimotheread@gmail.com or read.learn.achieve@live.com.

FATHEREAD/MOTHEREAD PARTICIPANTS

Kagman Head Start

The seven participants were Juan Dikito, Leila Stafler, Frankie Atoigue, Yolanda Kentaro, Mellanie Atalig, Maria Medina, and Shercey Teregeyo. Angelina Yobech, Motheread certified trainer, led the Motheread adult course session. Nov. 16, 2009 was certificate day.

Tanapag Head Start

The 10 participants were Brett Halstead, Noel Altamirano, Cecilio Raiukiulipiy, Aminul Islam, Martina Castro, Maria Veronica Saurez, Alyssa Herrera, Ayaka Akimura, Luna Johnney, and Akiko Noguchi. Viola Deleon Guerrero, Motheread program coordinator, was the trainer for this course. Nov. 11, 2009 was the course completion.

Oleai Head Start

The four participants were Estrella Jumilla, Marita Pangan, Jocelyn Flores, and Edita Aquino. Bryan Manabat, Motheread certified trainer, facilitated the 8-week, once-a-week course training. Nov. 17, 2009 was course completion day.

Chalan Kanoa Head Start

The eight participants in group 1 were Rochelle Tomokane, Alma Habos, Lorisa Dizon, Dionesia Dela Cruz, Charina Manabat, Federico Tamayo, Rebecca Ganngir, and Martha Joseph. Mary Jane Limes, Motheread certified trainer, facilitated the adult course.

Chalan Kanoa Head Start

The 9 participants in group 2 were Lorenza Romolor, Pedro Romolor, Salip Lansangan, Sulyman, Tazjmahal Hapa, Anna-lyn Palacios, Emylyn Cortez, Marissa Balbido, and Mary Grace Cruz. Viola Deleon Guerrero, Motheread program coordinator, facilitated the eight course sessions. Both groups completed the sessions Nov. 19, 2009.

Dandan Head Start

The four participants were Minerva Wabol-Mike, Roginia Banacia, Betty Koche, and Haydee Reyes. Facilitated by Rhea Chong and completed on Oct. 29, 2009.

Garapan Head Start

The 12 participants were Lory Giner, Joy Legaspi, Tisha Ferrer, Catherine Torres, Michelle Guiang, Emtaaz Chowdhury, Israt Chowdhury, Kamiz Ferdous, Regie Rivera, Gemma Eugenio, Tarlin Castro and Gemma Cadag. Facilitated by Rhea Chong and completed on Oct. 30, 2009.

Songsong Head Start Center

The 7 participants were Riza Mangaog, Monette Ladao, Jesusa Sabangan, Barbara Camacho, Arlinda Pinaula, Rosali Gascon, and Rosanna Bautista. Facilitated by Geraldine Dela Cruz. Completed Nov. 19, 2009.

San Antonio Head start Center

The seven participants were Nolyn Villagomez, Danny Kol, Marilou Pulido, Desima Pomdi, Omar Tesero, Lice Wu, and Hai Ming Wang. Bryan Manabat facilitated the sessions. Completed on Dec. 3, 2009

Sinapalo Head Start Center

The five participants were Jennifer Dela Cruz, Clayton Manglona, Gaylore Mangona, Lorraine Manglona, and Rona Flawa. Mary Lyn Ogo facilitated. Completed on Dec. 7, 2009.

Tinian Head Start Center

The nine participants were Jonah Lagota, Marites Hossain, Marites Balingit, Sheryle Reyes, Sarah Borja, Marilou Mercado, Anita Calibao, Melinda Cunanan and Sheila Cruz.

Life & Style

Taylor Swift voted AP entertainer of the year

NEW YORK (AP)—It's a love story, baby.

Taylor Swift sang those words about a young romance, but they apply just as well to America's feelings for the 20-year-old country singer. Swift, adding to the heap of awards already bestowed on her, has been voted The Associated Press entertainer of the year.

Swift was chosen by newspaper editors and broadcast producers across the country in a survey of AP members. She follows last year's winner, Tina Fey, and 2007's pick, Stephen Colbert.

"I am so honored and so excited," Swift said in an interview by phone with the AP. "This was so unexpected, and I could not be more grateful."

Though her second album, "Fearless," came out in late 2008, Swift was ubiquitous in 2009.

She found critical acclaim for her autobiographical and infectious songwriting, exemplified in tunes such as "Love Story" and "White Horse." She led a sold-out tour across 52 cities in North America.

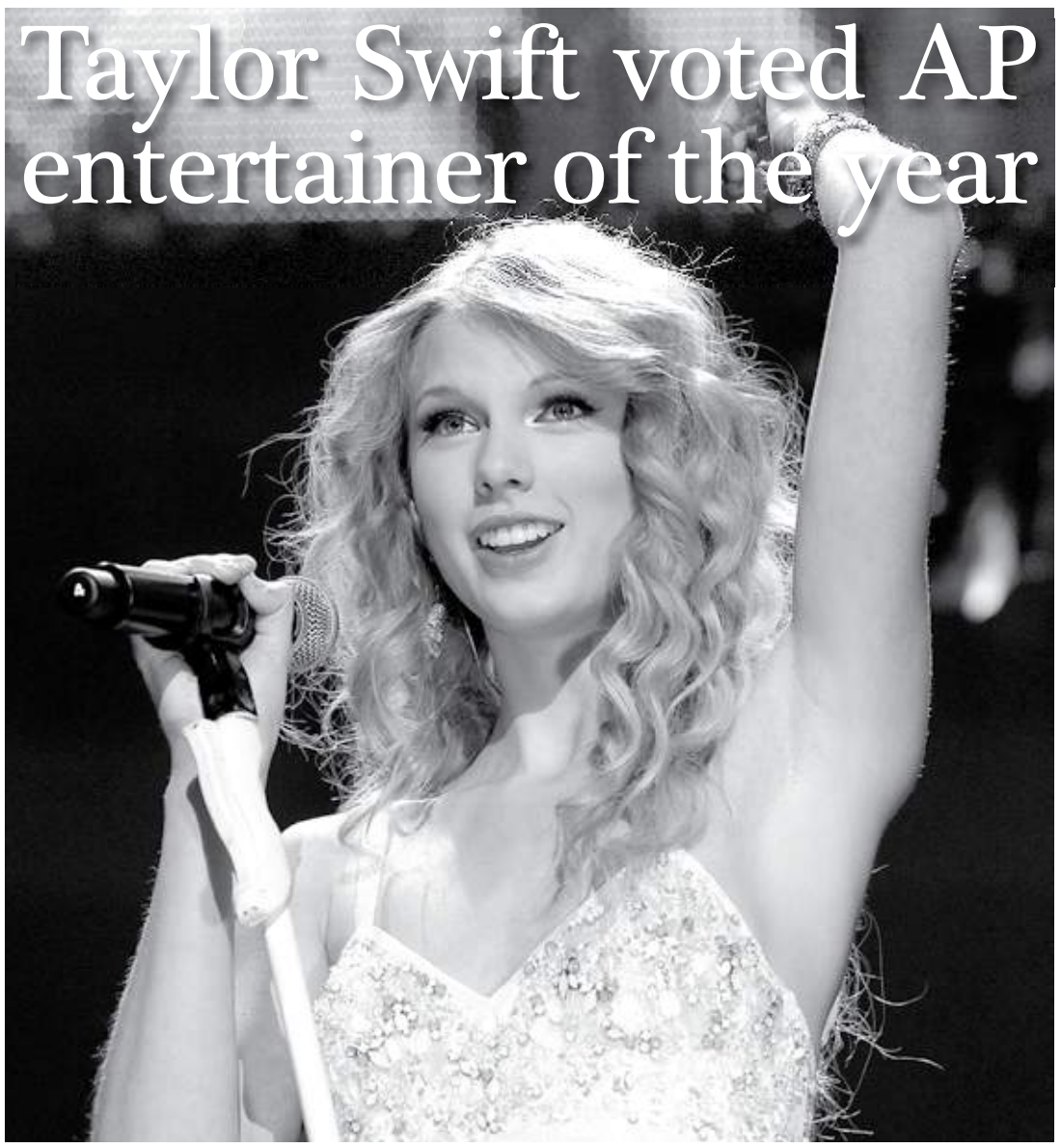
She won album of the year from the Country Music Awards and the Country Music Association Awards. She hosted "Saturday Night Live" and performed at the Grammys. She won five American Music Awards, including artist of the year.

At one point, she had eight songs on the Billboard Hot 100 chart.

Swift said that several nights of her year were "golden and shiny and I'll remember forever." Hosting "SNL" was one of those.

"That entire week was life-changing, honestly," said Swift. "It makes you feel so thankful to be a part of the music industry, but more than that, to me, 'SNL' is show business."

Another live show, the MTV Video Music Awards, was more of a mixed blessing for Swift. She was accepting the award for best female video (the first VMA to be given to a country act) when Kanye West stormed the stage and interrupted her speech. West's stunt set off a media storm that perhaps said as much about Swift's popularity (fans and musicians alike came to her defense) than it did about West's.



AP

In this Dec. 11, 2009 file photo, singer Taylor Swift performs at the 2009 Z100 Jingle Ball at Madison Square Garden in New York.

Among those who voted for Swift for entertainer of the year was Danielle L. Kiracofe, entertainment editor for the Stars and Stripes, the military newspaper.

"In a time of 'made' musicians, she writes her own songs and has her own sparkly style," said Kiracofe. "She's managed to do all of this with grace, class and poise—and without uttering a swear word, dancing on a pole or wearing next to nothing. At the age of 20."

Ellis Widner, style editor for the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, applauded Swift for superseding generational boundaries.

"She defines crossover appeal and would seem to be a strong business model in a declining music business," Widner said. "And to her fans, she's the real deal. On MySpace and in her songs, she wrote what she felt and sang about her experiences."

At year's end, Swift's life is in flux. She'll soon move out from home with her family, making this Christmas an emotional one for her.

She may well have more trophies to haul in, too: In January, she'll be attending the Grammys, where she's nominated for eight awards. She's already begun to look beyond 2009.

"The second that I put out `Fearless,' the moment that album came out and I was done with it, I started writing for my next album," said Swift. "I love to plan 20 steps ahead of myself, and it's really fun competition game that I play with myself, trying to top what I've done last. For this next record, that's all that I've been thinking about, that's all that my mind has been fixated on for the last year, and it's all that I'm going to be thinking about for this next year."

'Avatar' creator Cameron shares alien shop talk

LOS ANGELES (AP)—James Cameron offers what may be the most exotic planet full of aliens ever put on film in his sci-fi epic "Avatar."

Yet if and when humans do meet creatures from other worlds, they'll be unimaginably more far-out than anything Hollywood can dream up, Cameron said.

"It'll be much beyond what we can imagine," said Cameron, whose "Avatar" opened big this weekend with $232 million worldwide. "There are creatures right on Earth that are absolutely amazing, and all the aliens are already here, if you look at a small-enough scale or you look under the ocean."

"Avatar" tells the story of a human, Jake Sully (Sam Worthington), who takes on the form of the Na'vi, 10-foot-tall blue creatures that are the dominant species on the distant moon Pandora. Jake goes native, becoming a warrior in a Na'vi clan and falling for Na'vi huntress Neytiri (Zoe Saldana).

With pointed ears, huge eyes and tails, the Na'vi are anything but human. Yet like most extraterrestrials created by Hollywood, they still have a general humanoid form—two eyes, ears, arms and legs, a nose and mouth, smiles, grimaces and facial expressions we all can recognize.

"We looked at designs for the Na'vi that initially were much more alien," Cameron said. "When we would draw Neytiri and she had fins on her back and gills and all kinds of weird protuberances and so on in odd places, the question was, well, would you want to do her? No? OK, let's back off from that. ... We just didn't want to take it so far that she had kind of a fish mouth or anything."

AP

Director James Cameron, left, kisses actress Sigourney Weaver at the podium before Cameron was awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in Los Angeles, Friday, Dec. 18, 2009.

Along with blue skin and tails, the alienness of the Na'vi was conveyed largely through differences in scale. They tower over humans but have delicate proportions, thin frames and limbs, but eyes about twice as wide as ours.

Still, the Na'vi look human enough that audiences can relate to them the way they relate to other characters on screen. Cameron has an explanation for why the Pandora natives bear similarities to humans, which he plans to share down the road.

"We were doing a science fantasy, not true science fiction. We're not really predicting that there will be humanoids" on other planets, Cameron said. "When I write the novel of 'Avatar,' which I'm going to do as soon as the dust clears on the film release, I'm going to deal with the issue of why they look so much like us. Because there needs to be an overarching explanation of that, which I have."

"Avatar" presents a wild ecosystem in which the Na'vi commune with other animals and even plant life by tendrils that form a mental link. Pandora features giant plants that suck themselves into the ground when threatened, six-legged beasts of burden called direhorses, flying reptilian banshees and tiny jellyfish-like spores that float about the jungle landscape.

A seasoned diver with a passion for the life aquatic, Cameron explored the rich diversity of deep-ocean species in his documentary "Aliens of the Deep."

Cameron and his design team borrowed ideas from some of the most striking species on our world to augment the fantastic look of the lifeforms on Pandora—bioluminescent dot patterns on the skin of the Na'vi or elaborate designs inspired by tropical fish and frogs on the hides of the banshees.

"I wanted there to be a real exoticism. It was what I had sort of hoped they would do in 'Jurassic Park,' not make dinosaurs just kind of like we imagine dinosaurs, but make dinosaurs the way they might have been, which is like purple and gold. Because there are some lizards and amphibians and fish on this planet, granted on a smaller scale, that are absolutely stunning in their color patterns.

"So maybe it's just an overall kind of reverence and sense of wonder for nature and its inventiveness, and that really imbued every decision we made in terms of the creature design."

What's alien also comes down to who's doing the talking. In Cameron's "Aliens," the story was told from the perspective of Sigourney Weaver as she joins human Marines in a death match with savage alien predators.

Weaver battled hostile otherworldly monsters in four "Alien" movies, but this time, the tables are turned. Cameron reunites with Weaver on "Avatar," casting her as a scientist whose fellow humans wage war on the Na'vi to obtain an energy-rich mineral found on Pandora.

The term alien is used only a few times in "Avatar," in each case among Jake and the Na'vi referring to the humans, including Weaver's character.

"To me," Cameron said, "the irony is that she's in another kind of high-tech, futuristic, humans-vs.-aliens story, and she's the alien this time."

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In Loving Memory of

Ellen Ebreo Castro

We would like to invite all relatives and friends to join us in prayers as we commemorate the First Death Anniversary of our dearly beloved wife and mother.

Daily Mass will be offered at the San Antonio Church

Friday, December 25, 2009	8:00am
Saturday, December 26, 2009	6:00pm
Sunday, December 27, 2009	9:00am
Monday, December 28, 2009	6:00pm
Tuesday, December 29, 2009	6:00pm
Wednesday, December 30, 2009	6:00pm
Thursday, December 31, 2009	6:30pm
Friday, January 1, 2010	8:00am

The Eucharistic Celebration on the final day, **Saturday, January 2, 2010, will be at 6pm, at San Antonio Church.** Please join us for dinner after the final mass at our family's residence in Koblerville.

Your presence and prayers will be greatly appreciated

Si Yu'us Ma'ase

From: John I. Castro, Jr. & Children, and the Castro and Ebreo families

Authorities: Murphy likely died of natural causes

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Authorities said Monday it appeared actress Brittany Murphy died of natural causes after becoming ill with flulike symptoms in the days before she collapsed in the bathroom of her Hollywood Hills home.

Assistant Chief Coroner Ed Winter said an autopsy had been conducted and officials were awaiting the results of toxicology and tissue testing before determining an official cause of death. It could take up to six weeks before a determination is made public.

Officials also interviewed Murphy's personal physician and examined prescription drugs taken from her home.

Murphy

Paramedics tried to revive Murphy early Sunday, but she was pronounced dead at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center. The hospital said she died of cardiac arrest.

The autopsy found no signs of trauma to the body of the 32-year-old star of "Clueless" and "8 Mile." Police did not suspect foul play.

"We went to the scene to see if there was anything that suggests foul play, and there wasn't," Los Angeles police Detective Wendi Berndt said.

Winter said Murphy's family reported she had been ill and that could have contributed to her death. He said he had no further details about the medication taken from the home Murphy shared with her screenwriter husband Simon Monjack.

"My world was destroyed yesterday," Monjack told Access Hollywood in an interview Monday. He said Murphy's mother, Sharon, discovered the actress unconscious in the shower, and he called 911.

He told Access Hollywood that Murphy had laryngitis but it didn't seem that serious.

Funeral arrangements have not been announced.

"The sudden loss of our beloved Brittany is a terrible tragedy," Monjack and her family wrote in a statement. "She was our daughter, our wife, our love, and a shining star."

Murphy's death put "Saturday Night Live" in an awkward spot.

Two weeks ago, the NBC show aired a sketch during "Weekend Update" in which cast member Abby Elliott did an impression of Murphy, who had recently been fired from a film project. The impression portrayed Murphy as spacey and living in the past.

After Murphy's death, the sketch disappeared from Hulu.com, an online video repository co-owned by NBC Universal. Sharon Pannozzo, a publicist for "Saturday Night Live," didn't respond to requests for comment.

Murphy moved to Los Angeles with her mother, Sharon, in the early 1990s. Her career started with small roles in television series, commercials and movies. Her part in "Clueless" led to larger projects.

She is also known for her role in "Girl, Interrupted" and voiced the character Luanne Platter for more than 200 episodes of Fox's animated series "King of the Hill."

Her role in "8 Mile" led to wide recognition.

"That was the difference between people knowing my first and last name as opposed to not," she told AP in 2003.

Polanski dismissal rejected; misconduct alleged

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In a case that has polarized public passions, director Roman Polanski did not win his freedom Monday for a 32-year-old sex offense, but an appeals court said in a strongly worded opinion there was probable judicial and prosecutorial misconduct in his case.

The opinion criticized Polanski for fleeing to his native France in 1978 but suggested two legal options that could lead to his freedom now—file a motion to be sentenced in absentia, or drop his extradition fight, return to the United States and be sentenced in person, most likely not resulting in additional jail time.

Polanski wears an electronic monitoring device while under house arrest in Switzerland, where he was arrested as a fugitive when he arrived to attend a film festival in September.

"We encourage all participating parties to do their utmost to ensure that this matter now draws to a close in a manner that fully addresses the issues of due process and fundamental fairness raised by the events of long ago," the court's opinion states.

They rejected the request for outright dismissal, which was raised by Polanski and the lawyer for his victim, Samantha Geimer. But the justices said they were "deeply concerned" about probable misconduct by a now-deceased judge and a retired prosecutor who advised him. They urged further investigation.

The new focus on the case ignited a firestorm of public opinion worldwide. Some angrily called for Polanski to be imprisoned. Others, including some film industry colleagues, advocated for his freedom.

The appeals court faulted Polanski for fleeing the country rather than be sentenced.

Venice festival honors John Woo with lifetime award

HONG KONG (AP)—Organizers for the Venice Film Festival have honored John Woo with its lifetime achievement award, saying the veteran director transformed action movies both in his native Hong Kong and his current professional home of Hollywood.

Woo

Calling the 61-year-old filmmaker "an innovator of the contemporary language of cinema," festival organizers said in a statement posted on their official Web site Monday that they decided to award Woo the Golden Lion for lifetime achievement.

"The acknowledgment recognizes a filmmaker who in recent decades, with his revolutionary conception of staging and editing, has renewed action movies to the core, introducing an extreme stylization close to visual art, both in Asia and in Hollywood," organizers said.

Woo made his name in Hong Kong with stylish action films like "A Better Tomorrow," "The Killer" and "Hard Boiled" before moving on to the U.S., where his credits include "Broken Arrow," "Face/Off" and "Mission: Impossible II." Woo recently returned to China to make the two-part historical epic "Red Cliff." His next project is a movie about the so-called "Flying Tigers" - American fighter pilots who defended China against Japanese invaders during World War II.

"In his war and gangster film masterpieces, Woo has been capable of transfiguring hyperbolic motion and exasperated violence with a highly original poetic and romantic infusion, sustained by an extremely personal and energetic figurative tension, similar to a surreal hallucination," organizers said.

Woo's China-based assistant, Chen Tao, said the director was notified of the award but she didn't immediately have comment from the filmmaker.

The award will be presented at the 67th Venice Film Festival, which will be held Sept. 1-11, 2010.

AP

In this publicity image released by Atlantic Records, the A cappella group, Straight No Chaser, standing from left, Jerome Collins, Tyler Trepp, Randy Stine, Michael Luginbill, Ryan Ahlwardt, Seggie Isho,and Dan Ponce, seated from left, David Roberts, Charlie Mechling,and Walter Chase, are shown.

10 a cappella singers ready for pop stardom

By MESFIN FEKADU
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

NEW YORK (AP)—Imagine this: By day you're a typical businessman, working the 9 to 5. Your nights and weekends, however, are spent sharing a stage with nine other guys just like you—performing a cappella songs in small venues while recording an album under Atlantic Records.

That was the double life for the members of Straight No Chaser, an a cappella choir of 10 men who formed in 1996 during their college years at Indiana University.

They say their pursuit in music was experimental at first. Dan Ponce even jokes that they got together because they "wanted to sing to sorority girls."

"It was an interesting balance for that first year," said Ponce, who formed the group, which performs with eight of its original members.

Charlie Mechling, to laughs from the other group members, recalled how he earned a lot of frequent-flier miles jetting between his job and rehearsals.

"I was leaving Friday night from my life in Vegas, coming to New York, recording, rehearsing and then taking a redeye back," he said. "I felt like a businessman that didn't have any benefits or paycheck."

In college, some of the guys studied music, but not all of them. Others focused on mathematics, journalism or biology, among other subjects.

"We were there connected because we all loved a cappella singing," Ponce said.

The group first caught attention when the CEO of Atlantic Records saw on YouTube its rendition of "12 Days of Christmas," which has been viewed more than 10 million times.

Once signed, the group recorded a Christmas CD, "Holiday Spirits," released in September 2008. It followed that with another holiday album, "Christmas Cheers," which has a studio version of "12 Days" and was released last month.

"Our first album is your more traditional, gather-round-by-the-fire, relaxing, very soothing album," member Seggie Isho said. "'Christmas Cheers' is where you loosen up your tie, and it's the party album."

But more than just creating CDs good for stuffing Christmas stockings, the singers hope to be played on iPods offseason, too.

"Come Jan. 1, I am done with Christmas music," Mechling joked.

While on a North American tour, which wraps up this month, the group is performing holiday tunes as well as hit songs from the Billboard charts. In August it released "Six Pack," a six-song EP with covers from Amy Winehouse's "Rehab" to Stevie Wonder's "Signed, Sealed, Delivered I'm Yours." The group also says it's working on a pop album to showcase how it can be more than a "Christmas comedy act."

"Some of us have been concerned that people will only think of us as Christmas group, and that's not the case at all," Ponce said.

Crossing over to Top 40 radio with an a cappella sound and style will be challenge—but one the group says it's up for.

"A cappella music still has yet to really cross to the mainstream where we can be on a Top 40 radio station," Ponce said. "That's bold. I think we can do it, but we gotta go with baby steps."

The singers say they don't always agree with one another and a tour bus full of that many guys can be too much.

"A lot of sprays of Febreze (odor remover) going on," Isho said, laughing, while Ponce added: "We're thinking Febreze should be our sponsor for this tour."

But they say they are confident they won't end up disbanded like many musical groups. They say their musical brotherhood is too tight to break.

"We fight like brothers, we make up like brothers, but at the end of the day there really is a strong friendship and camaraderie that you don't see in a lot of modern pop groups," Ponce explained. "We weren't put together by Atlantic Records, we weren't put together by Simon Cowell ... we just did this ourselves."

Carrie Underwood engaged to NHL player Mike Fisher

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—Carrie Underwood is engaged to Ottawa Senators hockey player Mike Fisher, her publicist said Monday. No wedding date has been set for the couple, who have been dating for about a year. "The couple couldn't be happier," said publicist Jessie Schmidt.

Fisher, 29, recorded his 300th career point for the Senators in their 4-1 win over the Minnesota Wild on Saturday. Fisher had an assist on Anton Volchenkov's goal in the first period.

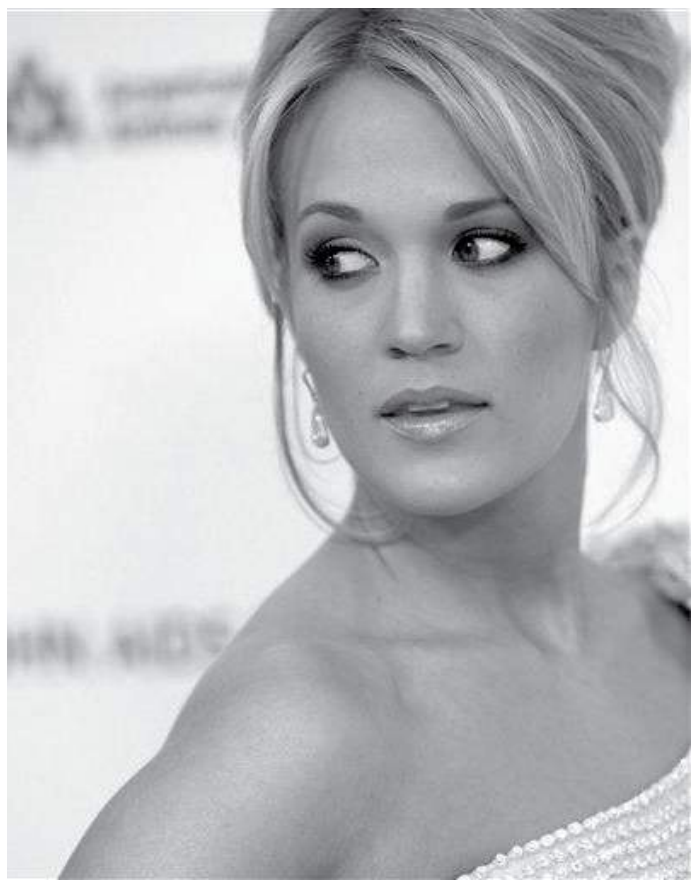
Asked by The Associated Press last month what Underwood's family thought of Fisher, the 26-year-old singer said they were supportive.

"They love me and I would hope my parents would think we raised a good, smart girl, so she's going to do the right thing no matter what it is," she said.

Days before the CMA Awards in early November, Underwood did not know whether she would be spending the holidays with Fisher.

"Christmas, I don't know. We haven't really thought that far ahead. We kind of take it one week at a time," she said then.

Underwood has kept her relationship largely under wraps, but she gave Fisher a very public shout-out in the liner notes of her current album, "Play On," that was released Nov. 3. She wrote, "Thank you (No.) 12 (referring to his jersey number.) You are the most amazing addition to my life! You are such a wonderful person and have had such an amazing hand in the building of this album and in the growth of me as a person. I love you so much! You make my life better in every way!"



AP

This Feb. 22, 2009 file photo shows singer Carrie Underwood posing on the press line at the Elton John Academy Award viewing and after party in West Hollywood, Calif.

MSNBC host Ratigan apologizes for 'rude' interview

NEW YORK (AP)—MSNBC host Dylan Ratigan apologized Monday for his "very rude" conduct last week during an interview on health care with a Florida congresswoman.

Democrat Debbie Wasserman Schultz was explaining Friday on Ratigan's show "Morning Meeting" why she supported health care reform. Ratigan, who said he has "incredible frustration" with the way the bill treated insurance companies, asked her to explain why stocks for insurers were going up.

Schultz said she wasn't a stockbroker, and the answer apparently left Ratigan unsatisfied. He said he would "give her a brief education."

"You could be your own guest," she told him as she tried to get a word in edgewise.

Ratigan eventually waved her off, saying he didn't want her to "come on and do talking points."

On Monday, Ratigan quoted an e-mail from a viewer who said he was "very rude." He agreed with the sentiment and apologized to the congresswoman and viewers.

"Our mission and my mission on this show is to shine the light on what is really happening, whether it's health care, the banks, or a war in the Mideast," he said. "And the way I went about that on Friday was a disservice to our viewers because it got in the way of doing just that."

A message seeking comment was left Monday with Schultz's spokesman.

Ratigan is the former host of CNBC "Fast Money." He learned last week that his daily two-hour show, "Morning Meeting," was being cut in half and moved to the afternoon.

Diane Sawyer begins at ABC's 'World News'

NEW YORK (AP)—Diane Sawyer was all business on a busy first day as anchor of ABC News' flagship evening newscast on Monday, save for a brief salute at the end to Charles Gibson, whose retirement opened the job for her.

"For you, Charlie Gibson, I hope you had a good day and a great night," Sawyer said, a reference to Gibson's usual signoff.

The centerpiece of the opening broadcast was Sawyer's interview with Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, conducted over the weekend. Sawyer confronted Ahmadinejad on a supposed "smoking gun" document that tied Iran to development of nuclear weapons. The president, who referred to Sawyer as "respectable lady," said the document was a fabrication.

Women now hold two of the three top jobs on what have always been considered the most prestigious newscasts on broadcast TV. Three years ago, CBS' Katie Couric became the first woman to hold the job by herself.

ABC has deliberately downplayed the transition on "World News." Some of the minor changes promised by ABC executives, including the show's first update of on-air graphics in five years, were evident.

Father: US man who inspired Rain Man' dies

AP

In this photo taken Thursday, July 23, 2009, Kim Peek, who was the inspiration for the movie "Rain Man," looks through a book at the Salt Lake City Library in Salt Lake City.

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — The man who inspired the title character in the Oscar-winning movie "Rain Man" has died.

Kim Peek was 58. His father, Fran, says Peek had a major heart attack Saturday morning and was pronounced dead at a hospital in the Salt Lake City suburb of Murray.

Peek was a savant with a remarkable memory and inspired writer Barry Morrow when he wrote "Rain Man," the 1988 movie that won four Academy Awards.

Fran Peek said his son met Morrow at a convention in the early 1980s and the writer was taken with Peek's knack for retaining everything he heard. Morrow wrote the script, and the movie went on to win Oscars for best film and best actor for Dustin Hoffman, whose repetitive rants about being an excellent driver and the TV show "People's Court" were a hit with moviegoers.

Although the character was technically fictional, Fran Peek said his son was every bit as amazing as Hoffman's portrayal of him. And Kim's true character showed when he toured the world, helping dispel misconceptions about mental disabilities.

"It was just unbelievable, all the things that he knew," Fran Peek said Monday.

In his later years, Peek was classified as a "mega-savant" who was a genius in about 15 different subjects, from history and literature and geography to numbers, sports, music and dates. But his motor skills were limited; he couldn't perform some simple tasks like dressing himself.

NASA scientists had been studying Peek, hoping that technology used to study the effects of space travel on the brain would help explain his mental capabilities.

'Sesame Street' star Alaina Reed-Amini dead at 63

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Alaina Reed-Amini, the Broadway star and TV actress best known for her long-running roles on "Sesame Street" and "227," has died. She was 63.

Publicist Billy Laurence says Reed-Amini died Thursday at St. John's Health Center in Santa Monica after a two-year battle with breast cancer.

Previously known as Alaina Reed-Hall, she recently remarried. Her stage credits include "Chicago" and "Hair." She appeared in several movies, including "Cruel Intentions" and "Death Becomes Her," and on TV shows such as "The Drew Carey Show" and "Ally McBeal."

Reed-Amini is survived by her husband, Tamim Amini, and two children from a previous marriage. According to her husband, a celebration of Reed-Amini's life is being planned for next year.

Couple's family planning is headed for serious crash

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I have been married two wonderful years. I was recently in a serious car accident and am currently unable to drive. The person who mainly drives me around is my husband, but sometimes friends and family take me to my appointments or to run errands. Recently my husband announced that he will no longer take me to buy my birth control pills because he's ready to have a child and doesn't want to wait.

Since I am out of work, I have no money of my own and must rely solely on him for support. Because he is no longer willing to provide me with the funds to buy birth control, I am unable to ask anyone else to give me a ride to the pharmacy. When we have sex, he refuses to use protection.

Although I want children in the future, I do not feel ready to have any now. We married young and still have years ahead of us to get pregnant and be active parents.

Please tell me what to do. I'm afraid if I refuse to have a baby with him he will leave or, when I am ready, decide our time to start a family has passed. I love him and would do anything for him. Should I just give in, and is it really worth a fight?

NOT QUITE READY IN COLORADO

DEAR NOT QUITE READY: You and your husband need professional mediation NOW. You should not be strong-armed into having a child, which is what your husband is attempting to do. Women who become pregnant under the circumstances you have described often feel trapped and resentful, which can negatively affect their ability to parent. If you were so seriously injured in the accident that you can't drive or work, it's questionable that you are even healthy enough to start a pregnancy.

What's happening is all wrong, and my alarm bells are blaring. If this is the way joint decisions are made in your marriage, there is real serious trouble ahead for you. So no, you should not just give in, and yes, it really is worth a fight—or, at the very least, further discussion.

■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My sister-in-law is in the process of losing weight. We're all very proud of her.

The problem is, whenever we are around her, she goes on and on about what she did or did not eat that day. She also gives us disapproving looks or makes unwelcome comments about what we are eating.

We have tried to gently change the subject, but it always goes back to food. Is there anything we can do or say to stop this without hurting her feelings?

HUNGRY FOR ADVICE IN LONGVIEW, TEXAS

DEAR HUNGRY FOR ADVICE: When someone is dieting, her (or his) life is centered on food—food that is allowed, food that is forbidden, etc. In fact, in many cases when people diet, they become more focused on and more obsessed with food than folks who are bingeing.

As long as your sister-in-law is dieting, she probably won't change. Only when she accepts that her new eating habits have become her lifestyle will food stop being uppermost in her thoughts.

Because her constant harping makes you uncomfortable, gently recommend that she join a weight-loss support group. There she will receive positive feedback from others who are experiencing her journey—and with luck you'll be subjected to fewer of the details.

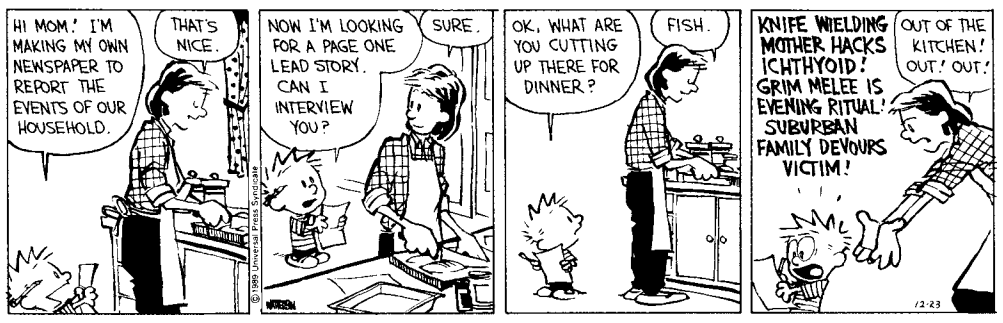
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For an excellent guide to becoming a better conversationalist and a more sociable person, order "How to Be Popular." Send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Popularity Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


HI MOM! I'M MAKING MY OWN NEWSPAPER TO REPORT THE EVENTS OF OUR HOUSEHOLD.
THAT'S NICE.
NOW I'M LOOKING FOR A PAGE ONE LEAD STORY. CAN I INTERVIEW YOU?
SURE.
OK, WHAT ARE YOU CUTTING UP THERE FOR DINNER?
FISH.
KNIFE WIELDING MOTHER HACKS ICHTHYOID! GRIM MELEE IS EVENING RITUAL! SUBURBAN FAMILY DEVOURS VICTIM!
OUT OF THE KITCHEN! OUT! OUT!
12-23

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

MERRY CHRISTMAS, MOM! HOW IS EVERYONE?
JIM DAVIS 12-23
www.garfield.com
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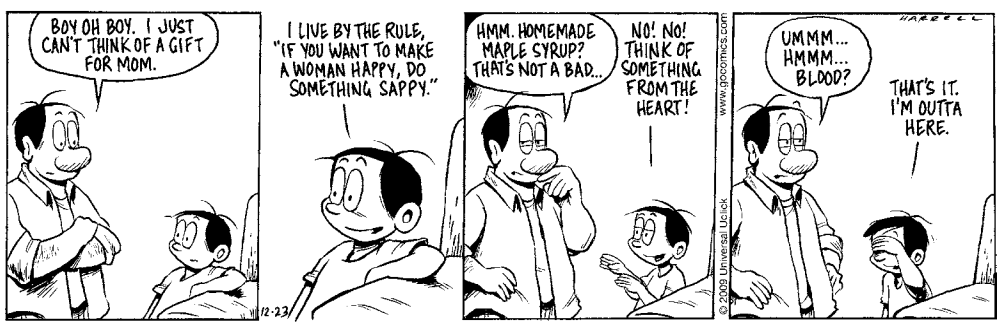
OH...THAT'S TOO BAD
THE ROOSTER HAS STREP THROAT
CHICKEN SOUP IS GOOD FOR THAT
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


BOY OH BOY. I JUST CAN'T THINK OF A GIFT FOR MOM.
I LIVE BY THE RULE, "IF YOU WANT TO MAKE A WOMAN HAPPY, DO SOMETHING SAPPY."
12-23
HMM. HOMEMADE MAPLE SYRUP? THAT'S NOT A BAD..
NO! NO! THINK OF SOMETHING FROM THE HEART!
www.gocomics.com
© 2009 Universal Uclick
UMMM... HMMM... BLOOD?
THAT'S IT. I'M OUTTA HERE.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Massachusetts cape
4 Eager
8 React in horror
12 Lawyers' org.
13 Baseball team
14 Church section
15 Part of H.R.H., at times
16 "The Clue in the Crossword Cipher" solver
18 Asian leader who inspired a jacket style
20 Small barrel
21 "Oh, woe!"
24 Antitoxin
28 Tapped
32 Ripped
33 Tatter
34 Binge
36 Past
37 Bit for Fermi
39 Patron of Scotland
41 Foundation
43 Not pizzicato
44 Slight application
46 Friars Club honor
50 "The Price Is Right" host
55 Scrooge's cry
56 Tittle
57 Unmacho type
58 Work with
59 Vacillate
60 Lummox
61 "Honor — father ..."

DOWN
1 Songwriter Sammy
2 Theater trophy
3 Morse's T
4 Ring
5 By way of
6 Hostel
7 Ship's floor
8 Thingie
9 Springtime abbr.
10 Away from NNW
11 Church perch
17 "Absolutely"
19 Uncooked
22 iPhone downloads
23 In a way, slangily
25 Bellow
26 Incite
27 Cat call
28 Hardly colorful
29 — -tat-tat
30 Hollywood clashers
31 Approach
35 Put into code
38 Carnival area
40 Scooby-—
42 Pouch
45 Cry loudly
47 Touch
48 Obi or cummerbund
49 Yon folks
50 Insult
51 Tier
52 Greek vowel
53 "Flying Down to —"
54 Ostrich's cousin

Solution time: 21 mins.

H	A	J	J	■	S	K	I	P	■	P	S	I
A	L	A	I	■	U	N	T	O	■	O	A	R
D	I	R	T	Y	P	O	O	L	■	O	F	A
■	■	■	N	E	S	T	■	E	L	L	E	N
W	I	S	E	S	■	■	A	M	O	S	■	■
A	S	H	Y	■	F	A	M	I	S	H	E	D
D	N	A	■	M	A	G	I	C	■	A	P	E
S	T	R	E	A	K	E	D	■	C	R	E	E
■	■	K	L	E	E	■	■	M	A	K	E	R
Y	E	T	I	S	■	O	U	R	S	■	■	■
O	V	A	■	T	A	N	K	S	U	I	T	S
D	E	N	■	R	I	C	E	■	A	C	H	E
A	R	K	■	O	R	E	S	■	L	Y	O	N

Yesterday's answer 12-23

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Corey Haim, 38; Martha Byrne, 40; Eddie Vedder, 45; Susan Lucci, 63

Happy Birthday: Be prepared to adapt to whatever changes are thrust upon you as you make your way this year. Nothing will be stable or go according to plan. Added responsibilities will make it even more important that you assess and react with utmost precision. Moderation will be your saving grace. Your numbers are 3, 11, 14, 20, 24, 38, 42

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You'll have to compensate for all the little aggravations you face. Work hard and you can overcome any obstacle. Last-minute shopping or well wishes will be appreciated. Take on a challenge but do so with dignity. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Take a pass if someone is trying to get you to buy into something that seems a little far-fetched. You are better off doing your own thing. It may not bring about fast cash or action but it will lead to a stable and secure future. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Someone may be trying to set you up by playing on your emotions. You have to say no to anything that is restrictive. Hide your emotions. It's better to be an onlooker for now. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): You are due for a change that will give you a new lease on life. Discuss your plans with the person you are closest to and you will get the confirmation you require to put your plans in motion. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): If you are quick to spread some of your ideas around to your colleagues and peers, you will get the feedback you require to make last-minute adjustments. You stand a good chance to advance in the new year if you are entertaining, knowledgeable and quick to respond. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Enjoy the company of friends and colleagues and you will be awarded with something that you least expect. Don't hold back. This is a great day to make a move you've been planning for some time. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Voice your opinion and let everyone know where you stand on issues that are being discussed for future change and policy. Your input will lead to an unusual offer that should help you put your talents to use in the new year. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You can pull things together that will please someone you love. An unusual purchase will surprise someone you feel responsible for. Keep a secret now. Use your leverage to get something you want in return. A playful game will turn into a romantic encounter. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): Keep things simple, quiet and peaceful. Taking on a challenge or pushing someone who isn't likely to back down will end in disaster. An unexpected change of plans will leave you at odds about what you should do. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Tell it like it is and you will gain respect and support. There is money to be made if you take an unusual approach to investing. You will come into a little extra cash. Plan your resolutions for the new year. ✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Don't reveal a secret that might incriminate you. The impact will be much greater if the recipient doesn't expect what you are about to do. Take a different approach to the way you handle your personal life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Don't let your emotions get the better of you. Take control of money matters and you won't have to worry about debt in the new year. Plan your actions carefully. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are engaging and know how to get things done. You have big dreams, interesting ideas and the wherewithal to accomplish whatever you set your mind to.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations,* ***myspace.com/eugenialast*** *for Eugenia's blog,* ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun*

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

	8	7	2	3	4	1	6	
	1						4	
		5	1	9	7	8		
	6						2	
4					1			9
2				8		6		3
7					8			4
	3						5	
		6	7	4	3	2		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 12/23

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

9	1	2	7	6	3	4	8	5
7	3	8	9	5	4	6	1	2
4	5	6	2	1	8	3	9	7
6	7	9	4	8	2	5	3	1
1	2	4	5	3	6	9	7	8
5	8	3	1	7	9	2	6	4
8	6	1	3	4	5	7	2	9
2	4	7	6	9	1	8	5	3
3	9	5	8	2	7	1	4	6

Difficulty Level ★★ 12/23

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

GREAT CLASSICAL MUSIC **Solution: 7 letters**

N	C	S	T	R	E	C	N	O	C	O	S	P	D	E
O	A	I	I	C	H	O	P	I	N	T	R	N	M	R
C	Y	I	N	R	O	N	S	A	U	E	A	O	O	N
T	P	L	R	O	A	U	I	B	C	H	T	L	P	E
U	O	U	O	A	M	P	E	O	E	I	E	A	M	G
R	Y	S	L	H	N	R	C	C	V	A	S	S	E	C
N	G	Z	O	M	C	I	A	E	I	T	O	X	T	I
E	I	T	R	U	O	N	D	H	L	P	P	A	U	R
U	D	L	L	U	T	N	A	U	O	A	M	C	D	E
R	O	A	S	A	O	R	A	L	T	A	O	R	E	D
O	R	W	B	M	U	T	I	R	E	E	C	O	S	E
P	P	I	U	B	(N)	S	I	V	Y	M	L	J	S	R
E	L	A	A	(O)	H	A	T	S	I	T	U	A	L	F
E	E	T	(C)	I	T	N	A	M	O	R	N	M	V	S
B	O	(I)	R	E	C	L	U	S	E	D	N	U	O	S

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Beau Monde, Cantabile, Chopin, Compose, Concerts, Emotive, Etudes, Europe, Expatriate, Flautist, Frederic, Genre, Hand, Harmonic, Icon, Live, Majorca, Melancholy, Music, Nocturne, Paris, Piano, Polish, Precocious, Prodigy, Pulmonary, Recluse, Romantic, Rubato, Salon, Sand, Sound, Tempo, Tour, Tubercular, Valetudinarian, Virtuoso, Waltz

Yesterday's Answer: Contact Lenses

SALE: The topics of "Wonderword for Kids" appeal to younger fans but the puzzle-difficulty matches what you've come to expect from Wonderword. For a limited time, the book is on sale for just $4 each (U.S. funds only), payable to Universal Uclick. Include $3 postage for the first book order, $1 p&h for each additional book. Send to Wonderword, 1130 Walnut St., Kansas City, Mo. 64106 or call toll-free, 1-800-642-6480.

CLASSIFIED ADS

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

Fina Sisu Apt., 2-BR, 1-BTH, FF, AC, BU Genset/ 24-hr water, security, laundry room, free Wi-Fi & ample parking. Right behind NMC campus. MIHA applicants accepted. Special rates for NMC faculty/ students. Call 235-6527/8 or 285-1317 for info.

WHATZIT Solution:
Left, right and centre

FOR RENT - RESIDENTIAL

2 Bedroom Apartment for Rent.
For $230.00 / month
Koblerville, please call 288-0728

FOR SALE

Pigs for Sale
Good for lechon ($2.50/lb)
Please call 287-4568

QQ RENT A CAR
Starting as low as... $25.00
Call: 233-9889 or 483-8866
$100 Security Deposit Required
Please visit QQ Store Garapan (2nd Road behind Fire Station)

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MAKE-A-WISH
Visit us at 865 S. Marine Dr.,
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Email: mawfguam@ite.net • www.wish.org
Office Hours: 8:30am-5:30pm, M-F daily
Saipan Tribune

SUBWAY® Career Opportunities

SUBWAY, the largest quick service restaurant chain in North America and on Guam, is looking for career-minded individuals to grow with our management team!

Position: Operations Manager

Job Description:

Successful candidate will be tasked with managing multi-unit restaurants including:

- Personnel management-directly supervise five or more employees in the Store(s) assigned
- Leads and motivates team to ensure financial success of each store assigned and makes hiring, firing, disciplinary and evaluation decisions
- Estimates food and beverage costs and requisition or purchases supplies needed for the assigned store
- Analyze store financial performance and ensure satisfaction for each sandwich made
- Make scheduling decisions to adequately support sales of each restaurant
- Communicates with senior management to report on operational issues
- Supports implements and communicates company policies and procedures to all staff on a human resources level of for the stores betterment
- Continuously works to improve training and development of the team
- Investigates and resolves food quality and service complaints
- Maintain quality standards and sanitation regulations

**Candidate will also be entitled to performance based compensation and other benefits. Training program will be provided; salary to be based on job performance upon completion of training. **

Requirements

- Graduate with degree in Business Management from accredited institution preferred, but not required.
- Three to Five years training and/or experience in restaurant management preferred
- Must posses Reasoning Ability & Strong Communication Skills (Fluent English oral & written)
- Must have knowledge of Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet software and Microsoft Word Processing software
- Competent in Leadership, Quality Management, Problem-solving capabilities to promote teamwork.
- Eligible to work or reside in US/Guam or to travel in Japan for business assignment.
- Must have a valid health certificate, valid Drivers license, and passport for travel.

Please drop off resume (with recent photo) in sealed envelope, attention to Human Resources Department, at our Subway Development Agent office located at: 2nd Floor Transpac Business Center, Middle Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan.

**No phone call, please **

Deadline for submission of application is on ***January 28, 2010***

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	$25
• 5-Liner	$35
• 3-Liner with picture	$45
• 5-Liner with picture	$55

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Saturday Issue:
- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on Monday issue.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

CHECK YOUR ADS

Saipan Tribune will not be responsible for errors after the first day of publication. Errors should be called in before noon of the issue date. *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

ADVERTISING POLICY

All advertising in the *Saipan Tribune* are subject to applicable rate sheet, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department (please call 235-8747, 235-2769 or 235-6397). All ads will be subject to approval prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit, refuse, reject or cancel any ad at any time. Also, *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to place ads under proper headings and to revise copy when necessary.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Open Date: Wednesday, December 23, 2009 **Close Date:** Friday, January 8, 2010

JVA No. 10-005

Position: Wastewater Treatment Plant Operations Supervisor (Saipan)

Salary: $53,000 to $80,000; Ungraded **Contract:** Two-year term

For more information about the position(s) being advertised, please stop by the Human Resources Office on the third floor of the Joeten Dandan Building.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND EMPLOYER
P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950-1220 U.S.A. Tel. Nos. (670) 235-7025 to 32 • Fax (670) 235-5131

JOB VACANCIES

SHENANIGAN'S RESTAURANT
is looking for
1 COOK
(at least 2 years experience in International Food)
2 KITCHEN HELPER/DISHWASHER
3 WAITER/WAITRESS

Must have good command in English Communication (other languages is a plus), at least 2 years of experience in F&B services, preferably but not limited to IR, Green Card or US Citizen. Please submit your Resume and Police and Court Clearance at SHENANIGAN's Restaurant in Garapan, Former Herman's Bakery right beside MITA Travel.

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: ITB10-OHS-033

SUBMISSION/OPENING DATE: JANUARY 15, 2010
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"YARD MAINTENANCE SERVICE FOR THE OFFICE OF HOMELAND SECURITY BUILDING NO.1326 AND TRAINING CENTER BUILDING NO.1358"

COPIES OF THE SCOPE OF WORK MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

PREFERENCE IS AVAILABLE TO U.S. CITIZENS OR PERMANENT RESIDENTS AS PER PUBLIC LAW 15-95 AND AS FURTHER AMENDED BY PUBLIC LAW 15-118 AND MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE BID IF PREFERENCE IS CLAIMED.

/S/ PATRICK J. TENORIO
SPECIAL ASSISTANT FOR HOMELAND SECURITY

/S/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
DIRECTOR, P&S

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
CNMI GOVERNMENT

INVITATION TO BID
ITB10-DPH-029

SUBMISSION / OPENING DATE: JANUARY 11, 2010 • TIME: 10:00 A.M.

"PURCHASE OF TWO (2) SERVERS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE PICKED-UP AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR, DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY, LOWER BASE DR., SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

THIS IS A FEDERALLY FUNDED PROJECT; AS SUCH, LOCAL PREFERENCE IS NOT AVAILABLE, BECAUSE ITS USE IS PROHIBITED BY FEDERAL LAW GRANTING FUNDING FOR THIS PROJECT.

/s/ JOSEPH K.P. VILLAGOMEZ
SECRETARY OF HEALTH

/s/ HERMAN S. SABLAN
Director, P&S

WHATZIT?™

Find the familiar phrase, saying or name in this arrangement of letters.

& LEFT

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Find today's solution in this section

DRUNK DRIVING Over the limit. Under arrest.

Kings storm back from 35 down to beat Bulls

CHICAGO (AP)—Tyreke Evans and the Sacramento Kings pulled off an incredible comeback, rallying from 35 points down in the second half to stun the Chicago Bulls 102-98 on Monday night.

According to the Elias Sports Bureau, it was the NBA's biggest comeback since Utah overcame a 36-point deficit to beat Denver on Nov. 27, 1996.

The Bulls led 79-44 with 8:50 left in the third quarter and were still up 83-50 two minutes later before they collapsed.

Evans personally outscored Chicago 9-3 over the final 2:13 and finished with 23 points for Sacramento, which has its first two-game road winning streak since late in the 2007-08 season.

After Sacramento finished the third with a 19-5 run to make it 88-69, Ime Udoka scored 15 of the Kings' next 22 points in 9:32 to cut it to 95-91. That's when Evans, the outstanding rookie guard from Memphis, took over.

Evans converted a three-point play and, after Chicago's Luol Deng made a free throw, scored on a drive and hit a foul shot to give the Kings their first lead since the opening minutes. Evans then hit a 22-footer at the shot-clock buzzer to put Sacramento up 99-96.

Derrick Rose made two free throws to cut it to 99-98 before Evans made one of two free throws. After Rose missed a layup, Beno Udrih clinched the win with two more free throws.

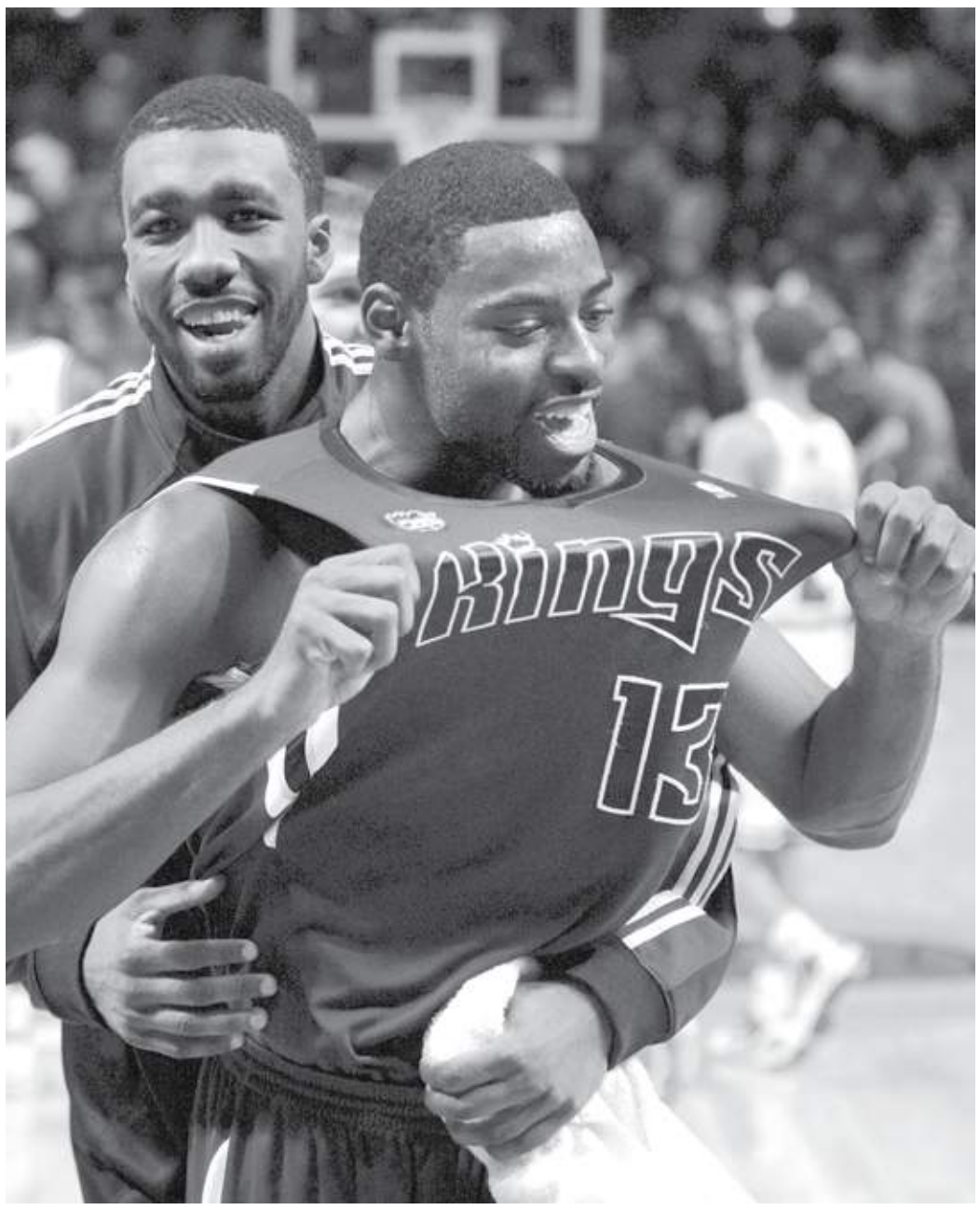
Deng scored 26 points and Rose added 24 for the Bulls, who were booed off the court.

Evans followed Rose to Memphis and both played only one year of college ball before turning pro. Rose was last season's Rookie of the Year and Evans, one of only four NBA players averaging at least 20 points, five rebounds and five assists, is a front-runner for the award this season.

The Bulls appeared on their way to an easy victory after an almost-perfect first quarter during which they shot 71 percent, committed no turnovers, held the Kings to 39 percent shooting and forced seven giveaways.

Chicago opened the second quarter with a 9-3 run, capped by Rose's driving layup, to take a 47-22 lead.

The Kings pulled to 61-43 on Omri Casspi's 3-pointer with 2:28 left in the half before Deng scored seven points as the Bulls used an 18-1 surge from the end of the second quarter through the early stages of the third to take their 35-point lead.



AP

Sacramento Kings guard Tyreke Evans (13) is hugged by Donte Greene as he celebrates his team's 102-98 come-from-behind win over the Chicago Bulls in an NBA basketball game Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, in Chicago.

In the fourth quarter, the Bulls were 2 for 10 from the floor and had nine turnovers. The Kings, meanwhile, shot 11 for 21, including 4 of 6 from 3-point range, and turned the ball over only twice.

Cavaliers 109, Suns 91

At Phoenix, LeBron James and Mo Williams led a 15-0 fourth-quarter run as Cleveland handed Phoenix its first home loss of the season.

James scored 29 and Williams 24 as the Cavs shot 53 percent. Steve Nash had 18 points and 10 assists for Phoenix.

The Suns, the NBA's only unbeaten team at home at 10-0 entering the game, had won 19 straight there overall. Their previous home loss was on March 12 — to the Cavaliers.

Shaquille O'Neal didn't get much of a reaction from the fans in his first game in Phoenix since the Suns traded him to Cleveland, just a smattering of cheers and boos when he was introduced.

In foul trouble much of the night, O'Neal had three points and five rebounds in 19 minutes.

Bucks 84, Pacers 81

At Indianapolis, Andrew Bogut scored a career-high 31 points and grabbed 18 rebounds to lead Milwaukee over Indiana.

Rookie guard Brandon Jennings had 16 points and six assists and Michael Redd scored 14 for the Bucks, who snapped a three-game skid and won their first road game since Nov. 21.

Roy Hibbert had 16 points and Troy Murphy added 14 points and 12 rebounds for the Pacers.

Indiana had two late chances to equalize, but T.J. Ford missed a pair of 3-pointers in the closing seconds.

Spurs 103, Clippers 87

At San Antonio, Tony Parker scored 19 points and Roger Mason Jr. helped give San Antonio a decided bench advantage in a victory over the Los Angeles Clippers.

Parker, who was 7 of 11 from the field, had eight points in a decisive third-quarter run as the Spurs extended an 11-point halftime lead to 21 entering the fourth.

Mason finished with 12 points, including 10 in a 9:40 stretch of the second quarter, as San Antonio's reserves outscored their Los Angeles counterparts 41-27.

The Spurs, who had seven players score in double figures, defeated the Clippers for the second time in eight days, the 14th consecutive time overall and the 14th straight meeting in San Antonio.

Chris Kaman had 23 points and 15 rebounds to lead the Clippers.

Magic 104, Jazz 99

At Orlando, J.J. Redick had 20 points and Rashard Lewis scored 18 as the Magic blew past Utah with some potent 3-point shooting.

Redick and Lewis led a 15-2 run late in the fourth quarter to pull away, highlighting a 9-for-21 night from beyond the arc for the Magic. Orlando won for the fourth time in five games.

Jameer Nelson returned for the Magic for the first time since he had surgery Nov. 18 to repair torn cartilage in his left knee. The All-Star point guard finished with two points in limited play.

Paul Millsap had 23 points and Deron Williams added 18 for the Jazz.

Yankees hit with $25.7M luxury tax

NEW YORK (AP)—Winning came with a hefty price for the New York Yankees. The World Series champions were hit with a luxury tax of nearly $25.69 million Monday, according to information received by clubs and obtained by The Associated Press.

New York is the only team to pay a tax for this season and has crossed the threshold in all seven years since the tax started. According to the collective bargaining agreement, the Yankees must send a check to the commissioner's office by Jan. 31.

The Yankees have been billed $174 million of the tax's $190 million total since 2003. The only other teams to pay have been Boston ($13.9 million for 2004-7), Detroit ($1.3 million for 2008) and the Los Angeles Angels ($927,059 for 2004).

At least the Yankees got value for their spending, winning the World Series for the first time since 2000 after adding high-priced free agents CC Sabathia, A.J. Burnett and Mark Teixeira. And the Yankees did lower their tax bill from $26.86 million last year, when their streak of consecutive playoff appearances ended at 13.

New York's payroll was $226.2 million for the purpose of the luxury tax and the Yankees pay at a 40 percent rate for the amount over $162 million. To compute the payroll, Major League Baseball uses the average annual values of contracts for players on 40-man rosters and adds benefits.

The Yankees' regular payroll - using 2009 salaries and prorated shares of signing bonuses—finished at $220 million. That was a drop of $2.5 million from 2008 but more than $77.8 million higher than any other team - a gap larger than the payrolls of the bottom 11 clubs.

The New York Mets were second at $142.2 million, followed by the equally disappointing Chicago Cubs ($141.6 million).

Boston ($140.5 million) was next, followed by Detroit ($139.4 million) and NL champion Philadelphia ($138.3 million), a big increase from the $112.7 million the Phillies spent when they won the World Series in 2008.

Only two teams outside the top 11 by payroll made the postseason: Colorado (16th at $84.5 million) and Minnesota (23rd at $73.1 million).

Florida again was last in the majors, even though the Marlins raised their payroll by $10.5 million to $37.5 million. San Diego dropped from 23rd at $71.2 million to 29th at $43.2 million.

Half the 30 teams cut payroll from 2008. In addition to the Padres, Seattle dropped from $120.5 million to $102.3 million, Toronto fell from $98.3 million to $84.1 million and Cincinnati sliced from $82.9 million to $72.7 million.

Besides the Phillies, other teams with big increases were Tampa Bay ($51.0 million to $71.2 million), San Francisco ($82.1 million to $95.2 million), Kansas City ($69.2 million to $81.9 million), the Cubs ($130.5 million to $141.6 million) and Washington ($59.7 million to $69.3 million).

Overall payroll rose 1.2 percent to $2.91 billion from $2.88 billion, down from a 6.3 percent increase the previous year.

Payroll figures are for 40-man rosters and include salaries and prorated shares of signing bonuses, earned incentive bonuses, non-cash compensation, buyouts of unexercised options and cash transactions, such as money included in trades. In some cases, parts of salaries that are deferred are discounted to reflect present-day values.

The commissioner's office computed the average salary at $2,882,336. The players' association, which uses slightly different methods of calculation, had its average at $2,996,106.

MLB BRIEFS

Sources: Nationals, Marquis agree on 2 years

WASHINGTON (AP)—Two people familiar with the deal have told The Associated Press that the Washington Nationals and free-agent pitcher Jason Marquis have agreed to a two-year contract, pending a physical. One person said the deal is worth about $15 million. Both spoke to the AP on Monday on condition of anonymity because the contract had not been signed. The Nationals said that they would hold a news conference at their stadium on Tuesday to announce a free-agent signing, but the team did not say who the player is. Marquis is a right-hander who went 15-13 with a 4.04 ERA and 115 strikeouts in 216 innings for Colorado in 2009. He adds the sort of veteran, innings-eating presence that Washington's starting rotation has been lacking.

Sources: MLB, umps near new deal

NEW YORK (AP)—Major League Baseball and its umpires are nearing agreement on a new contract, two people familiar with the negotiations said Monday. The deal could be reached as soon as Tuesday, the people said, speaking on condition of anonymity because no announcements were authorized. Management has been seeking to gain increased flexibility on postseason assignments as part of the agreement, which could allow umpires to work the World Series in consecutive seasons. Following a series of missed calls during the playoffs, MLB went with an all veteran crew of six umpires in this year's World Series. This would mark the second straight agreement between the sides reached without acrimony. Recent deals between baseball and its umpires have run for five years.

Giants stay in playoff hunt, beat Redskins

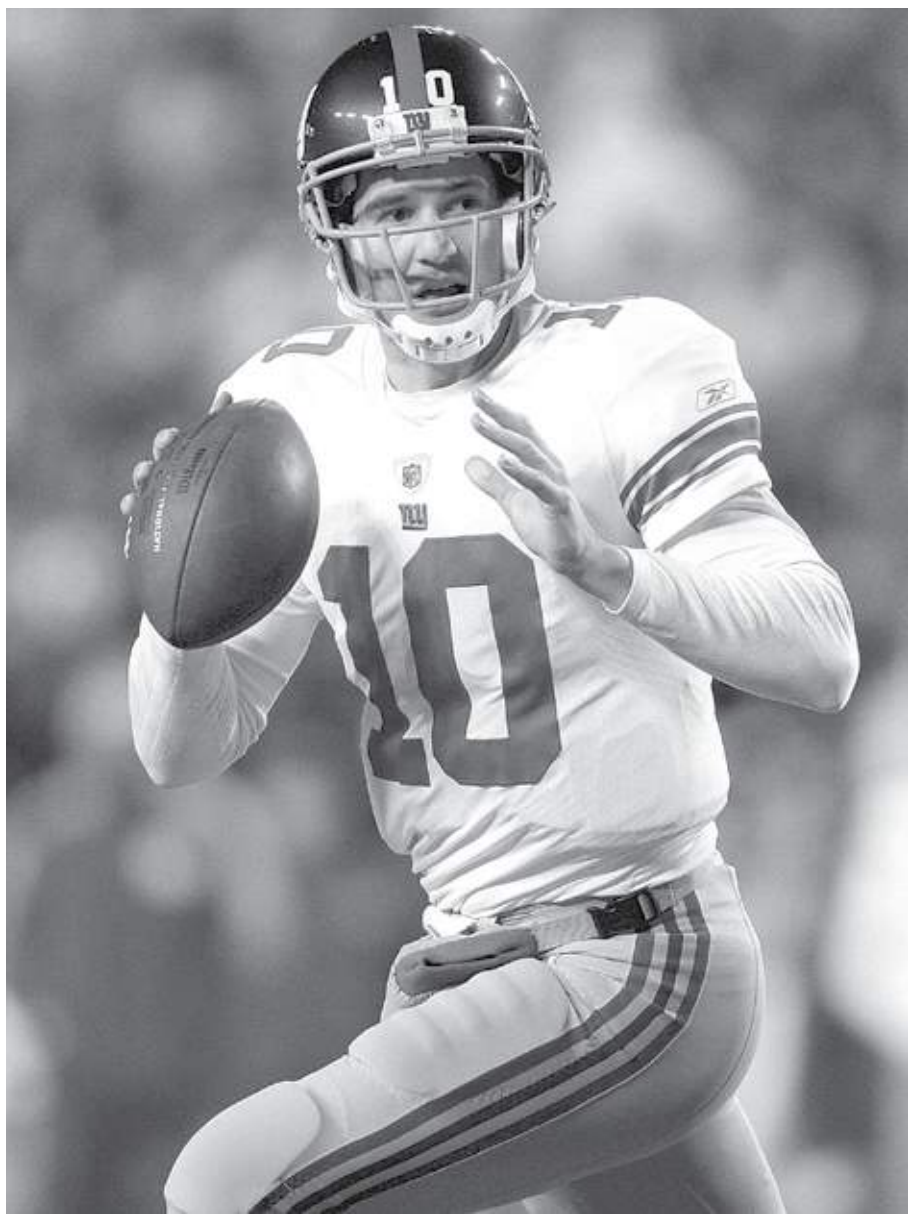
LANDOVER, Md. (AP)—Playing for their playoff lives, Eli Manning and the New York Giants were efficient, focused and dominant.

Playing for their new general manager, the Washington Redskins did a good job of convincing the boss that maybe everyone ought to be fired.

The Giants kept themselves in the postseason hunt Monday night with one of the most lopsided victories in the long, storied series against their NFC East rival. New York scored on six of its first seven possessions and controlled every facet of the game in a 45-12 win that wasn't as close as even that margin of victory would indicate.

Manning completed 19 of 26 passes for 268 yards and three touchdowns, and Ahmad Bradshaw ran for two scores for the Giants (8-6), who are one game behind Dallas and Green Bay in the battle for wild-card spots with two weeks remaining in the regular season. A loss would have left New York with only the faintest of playoff hopes.

The Giants marched downfield at will to take a 24-0 halftime lead. At one point in the second quarter, they held a 226 to minus-2 advantage in total yards, a 16-0 dominance in first downs, and the time of possession gap was roughly 21 minutes to 4 1/2. The Redskins (4-10) went three-and-out on their first three possessions, finally got a first down on the fourth, then tried to pull a ridiculous-looking fake field goal on the fifth—a play that produced a Giants interception to end the half.



AP

New York Giants quarterback Eli Manning looks for an open man during the first quarter of an NFL football game against the Washington Redskins, Monday, Dec. 21, 2009, in Landover, Md.

Even when the Redskins scored their first touchdown—with the game already out of reach in the third quarter—the Giants blocked the extra point.

The Giants defense, with its habit of giving up big-yardage plays, had largely been the culprit as the team lost six of eight games to waste a 5-0 start. The unit was stout, however, against the Redskins—even with defensive backs Corey Webster and Aaron Ross inactive with injuries.

Terrell Thomas got his fifth interception of the season and turned it into his first NFL touchdown with a 14-yard runback. Osi Umenyiora temporarily forced Jason Campbell out of the game with one of five sacks by different players. Campbell sprained a shoulder on the play, which occurred in the final minute of the first half, but he returned to start the second half.

Bradshaw had touchdown runs of 3 and 4 yards in the first half and was greeted both times with snowballs thrown from the stands. The Redskins had to remove an estimated 25 million pounds of snow from the stadium and their parking lots just so the game could be played two days after a historic East Coast storm.

Getting his first tour of the stadium earlier in the day was Bruce Allen, hired on Thursday as the Redskins general manager in a front-office shake-up that included the ouster of longtime front-office chief Vinny Cerrato. Allen is using the final three games of the season to evaluate his new team, and coach Jim Zorn didn't do much to help whatever slim chances he had of returning next season.

The Giants set the tone by taking the opening kickoff and driving 80 yards for a touchdown in a 16-play drive that took 9:13. The second drive was 63 yards in 11 plays over 5 minutes.

The holes were there even though the offensive line was a patchwork job. Right tackle Kareem McKenzie missed the game with a left knee injury, so rookie Will Beatty got the start. Left guard Rich Seubert limped off with a right knee injury after Bradshaw's first touchdown run; he was replaced by Kevin Boothe.

Police continue investigation into Henry's death

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The investigation into the death of Cincinnati Bengals receiver Chris Henry carried into its sixth day on Monday without a resolution on whether his fiancee will be charged.

Henry died Thursday from massive head injuries, a day after falling out of the back of a pickup truck driven by fiancee, Loleini Tonga. Charlotte-Mecklenburg police described the incident as a domestic dispute.

"There is nothing new to report. She hasn't been criminally charged in his death, nor has she been cited for any traffic violations," police spokesman Robert Fey said Monday. "That said, the investigation into Mr. Henry's death continues."

Henry, who was 26, was away from the Bengals after being placed on injured reserve last month with a broken forearm. Police said Henry and his fiancee got into an argument at the Tonga family home and she drove away in a pickup truck.

Police said Henry then jumped into the bed of the truck. Witness Lee Hardy told reporters he heard Henry say, "If you take off, I'm going to jump off the truck and kill myself."

A 911 caller told a dispatcher she saw a shirtless man wearing a cast "beating on the back of this truck window." A later 911 caller said he saw an unresponsive man laying on a curvy, residential road about eight miles northwest of downtown Charlotte.

Police say Tonga stopped to assist Henry after he "came out of the back" of the pickup. Henry died about 18 hours later at Carolinas Medical Center. The autopsy showed the cause of death as blunt-force trauma to the head.

"We understand the time concerns that people have, but unfortunately we cannot rush the investigation to satisfy people's curiosity into whether or not the fiancee will be charged," Fey said.

Henry's funeral is scheduled for Tuesday in Louisiana. The Bengals are expected to attend as a team, two days after losing to San Diego.

Holmgren agrees to join Browns as team president

BEREA, Ohio (AP)—Serious. Credible. A leader. In Mike Holmgren, Cleveland Browns owner Randy Lerner hit the trifecta he desperately wanted.

Holmgren, who returned Green Bay to prominence and raised Seattle's profile during his NFL career, on Monday accepted an offer to become president of the Cleveland Browns, a tradition-rich franchise needing a major makeover after a decade of losing and front-office incompetence.

Lerner said he reached a preliminary agreement with Holmgren, a Super Bowl-winning coach who brings immediate credibility to the down-and-out Browns.

"We are pleased to announce that Mike Holmgren has agreed to join the Cleveland Browns," Lerner said in a statement. "We will spend the rest of the week finalizing the details of the agreement and will make a formal announcement next week."

As part of a front-office shakeup, Lerner said current president Mike Keenan will become the club's chief financial officer.

The 61-year-old Holmgren is coming to Cleveland strictly in an executive role. Last week, he indicated his job offer with the Browns could include a return to the sideline. But Holmgren will remain upstairs and serve as the camera-shy Lerner's top executive.

With his trademark mustache and distinct, rounded features, Holmgren is the new face of the Browns.

While embraced by Cleveland fans, Holmgren's arrival could be trouble for coach Eric Mangini, who is just 3-11 in his first season. Holmgren, who will likely bring in a general manager to oversee personnel decisions, may also replace Mangini.

But with Cleveland's 41-34 win over Kansas City on Sunday, Mangini may have strengthened his chances of staying and will have two more games to impress his new boss. Mangini is convinced he has the Browns, who have lost at least 10 games in six of the past seven seasons and made the AFC playoffs just once since 1999, headed in the right direction.

Mangini can only hope Holmgren agrees or it will be one-and-done for him in Cleveland.

Holmgren refused to speculate on Mangini's status last week during a radio appearance. He praised Mangini's coaching ability and work ethic, and said he would give any coach a chance, especially one in his first season. Holmgren cited Bill Parcells' firing of Cam Cameron in Miami when the former coach took over as the Dolphins' "football czar."

"Those types of decisions, the tough decisions, sometimes they aren't fair," Holmgren said. "But I would do everything in my power to make sure it's the right one and that everyone gets a chance to prove themselves."

Interestingly, Holmgren's agreement with the Browns came exactly one year to the day after he coached Seattle to a 13-3 win over Mangini's New York Jets, essentially ending the Jets' playoff chances and finishing off Mangini, who was fired following last season.

Holmgren said he was intrigued by the opportunity to join Cleveland because of the absence of "layers" between him and Lerner, who in November announced he was looking to add a "serious, credible leader" to his organization. Holmgren spent two days meeting with Lerner last week and came away impressed by the owner's passion to win and what he learned about the Browns.

On Saturday, Holmgren turned down a front-office position with the Seahawks, whom he coached for 10 seasons, serving four as GM and coach.

Holmgren stepped down as Seattle's coach after last season to spend more time with his family. However, the chance to rebuild another franchise was too much for him to resist, and he's coming out of semiretirement to take on the Browns, who haven't had anyone of his renown on board since their expansion return.

"The challenge of rebuilding is kind of in my blood," Holmgren said last week.

During his Monday news conference, Mangini was again put in the uncomfortable position of having to address speculation about Holmgren, who led the Packers to two Super Bowls and taking the Seahawks to their only appearance.

"I'm really focused on the group and getting them ready to play," Mangini said before the team announced its deal with Holmgren. "As far as a timeline or any of the other things, it's not what I'm doing or concentrating on. It's not what the coaches are concentrating on and not what the players are concentrating on.

"What I'm looking to do is coach the team. That's it."

The Browns beat the Chiefs with record-breaking performances by running back Jerome Harrison and kick returner extraordinaire Josh Cribbs.

Harrison rushed for 286 yards, breaking Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown's team record and posting the third-highest total in league history. Cribbs returned kickoffs 100 and 103 yards in the first half, matching the single-game mark and setting the career record with eight touchdown returns.

Following the game, Mangini got an endorsement to remain as coach from Brown, who serves as an executive adviser to Lerner.

"Of course I think he deserves it from Jim Brown's point of view," said Brown. "What I'm looking at is an improved team. A lot of young people that we don't even know are playing good football. I don't know the politics behind the scenes. I'm not going to contradict (Lerner). Right now we've won two in a row and I think it's proven there is direction."

Not long before announcing Holmgren's hiring, the Browns were informed that former GM George Kokinis had filed arbitration with the NFL claiming he was unjustly fired. Kokinis was dismissed on Nov. 2 after nine months on the job. He is seeking more than $4 million in compensation and damages.

Browns general counsel Fred Nance said the team was aware of Kokinis' filing.

"We've received it and are reviewing it," Nance said through a team spokesman.

Stellar fighters lined up as Pacquiao's sparmates

BOXING

MANILA, Philippines— When superstar Manny Pacquiao plunges into deep training for his monumental showdown with Floyd Mayweather Jr, expect him to once again win the battle of sparmates as a stellar line up of fighters are being put into consideration in Baguio City and Los Angeles.

Pacquiao, who is slated to begin training in the second week of January in the country's summer capital, is expected to benefit from a 'dream team' of champions who will be tapped to spar with the world's best pound-for-pound fighter.

World renowned trainer Freddie Roach, who has guided Pacquiao's career with wins over the biggest names in boxing in this generation, will be recruiting quick-fisted and skillful fighters to assist the Filipino icon in his first WBO welterweight defense.

WBA junior welterweight Amir Khan, coming off an impressive title defense over Dmitri Salita, is already a sure sparring partner, and already branded by Roach as the Pacman's chief sparmate for the fight. Another big name being put in consideration is Andre Berto if he doesn't get cut or injured in his January duel with Shane Mosley. ***(PDI)***

SIXERS

From Page 28

ball as time expired.

Ada paced the Sixers' semifinals victory, firing 23 points. He scored 11 of the Sixers' last 13 points to foil the Saints' repeated comeback bids.

The Saints fell behind by as much as 14 points midway in the second half, before Tudela's 3-point shooting brought the team back into the game. However, Tudela failed to deliver under pressure when he missed the clutch free throws.

Both teams played helter-skelter basketball in the closing seconds of the game, turning the ball over several times. A midcourt error pass from Matt Duenas to Ada gave possession back to the Saints and Tom Pangelinan cashed on a turnaround jumper to cut the Sixers' lead to two, 64-66, with 36.5 left on the clock.

When the Sixers regained possession, Matt Duenas was fouled but missed both free throws. Dominic Reyes chased the long rebound, saved the leather from going out of the sideline, but passed it to the wrong man. The Sixers also committed a passing error and Leo Galarse caught the ball, making a baseball pass to Tudela, who pulled up for a triple, missed the shot, and fell the floor, as he was bumped by Flores.

G-Stars 57, 670 Rollers 50

In the first semis game, the G-Stars' much deeper bench was too much for 670 Rollers.

G-Stars coach Jose Tumaquip drew double figures from three players and had three more making at least two field goals to help the team recover from a slow start.

Starters Nate Mateo and Marvin Rabauliman scored 14 and 11 markers, while Ed Manalili chipped in 12 off the bench. Clayton Kenty, Luis Byun, and J.R. Concepcion combined for 15 markers.

670 Rollers was on top at halftime, 29-27, but failed to sustain its momentum in the second half when G-Stars starters and bench players joined forces in lifting their team to a seven-point win.

First Game

G-Stars 57 – N. Mateo 14, E. Manalili 12, Rabauliman 11, Kenty 6, Byun 5, Concepcion 4, Lebria 2, D. Mateo 2, Castro 1.

670 Rollers 50 – Palacios 13, Brel 12, Maratita 6, Danas 5, Ogo 4, Lisua 4, Deleon Guerrero 3, Laniyo 3.

Scoring by halves: 27-29, 57-50.

Second Game

Sixers 68 – Ada 23, M. Duenas 17, E. Duenas 14, Flores 7, Benavente 6.

Saints 66 – Aulerio 17, Tudela 15, Galarse 15, L. Reyes 9, Iglecias 6, Pangelinan 2, D. Reyes 2.

Scoring by halves: 34-34, 68-66.

FOUR

From Page 28

close fight in the first half and the latter was very much in the game in the third period, before the former stepped on the gas pedal in the final canto en route to the 14-point win.

Prospects led at the end of the first period, 23-21, on Cadagat's first triple of the night. Ol'Aces then grabbed the driver's seat at halftime, 39-37, behind the combined 15 points of Dan Barcinas and Gabriel White in the second quarter. Ol'Aces stretched the lead to seven, entering the payoff canto, 62-55, as Barcinas continued to burn the hoops, adding nine more points in the third period.

Ryan Sanciangco played for Prospects in the fourth quarter after missing the first 30 minutes of the game, but his presence was not enough to prevent Ol'Aces from pulling away.

Jose Tumaquip led Ol'Aces' breakaway in the final canto, canning three triples, while veterans Elias Rangamar, Romeo Iginoef, and Peter Camacho put the finishing touches on the team's fourth win, combining for 14 markers in that period.

Barcinas top-scored for Ol'Aces with 28 points, while White chipped in 15, filling the void left by Jack Lizama on the team's offense. Iginoef was the other double figure scorer for Ol'Aces, nailing 15 points.

Cadagat had 23 points for Prospects.

Hoopaholics 85, Trinity 61

In the curtain-raiser, Hoopaholics made it to the win column after three futile tries when they clobbered Trinity Estates, 85-61.

Hoopaholics controlled the game from start to finish to hand Trinity its fourth loss in as many games.

Joseph Villacrusis drilled 10 of his 19 points in the first period to give Hoopaholics a 25-12 lead. By halftime, Hoopaholics almost doubled Trinity's output, taking a big 45-23 advantage, as the former drew points from every player they fielded in the game.

Trinity failed to make any headway in the second half, allowing Hoopaholics to walk away with the 24-point win.

First Game

Hoopaholics 85 – Jo. Villacrusis 19, Ruluked 10, Teregeyo 10, Palacios 8, Cruz 8, Mendez 8, Manibusan 4, Ja. Villacrusis 5.

Trinity Estate 61 – Herrera 33, Hernandez 10, Manuel 8, Dulfo 4, J. Loste 4, A. Loste 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-12, 45-23, 62-39, 85-61.

Second Game

Ol'Aces 91 – Barcinas 24, White 16, Iginoef 15, Iguel 9, Tumaquip 9, Camacho 8, Omar 4, Rangamar

Prospects 77 – Cadagat 23, Peredo 13, Sanciangco 10, Johnson 7, Inos 7, Paul 6, Lauron 5, Barbo 4.

Scoring by halves: 21-23, 39-37, 62-55, 91-77.

DOCOMO

From Page 28

in the UBA caging on the same night they will duel Hyatt.

Wowie Abuel and Kae Bernardo will suit up for Noni Saipan in the second game in the UBA caging, while Jun Estolas and Kelvin Fitial will play for Advance X-Terminators in the first game. The Docomo-Hyatt game is set for 6:30pm, while the first match in the UBA caging is set for 6pm.

Lee said he tried to request for the rescheduling of the match, but organizers said no and insisted on finishing the league before the year ends.

Hyatt is facing the same dilemma, as when the playoffs started, the pennant champion is playing with only six to seven players. In its 93-86 double overtime win against Public School System, Hyatt played with only five players midway in the third period after gunner Dave Sablan suffered a bad fall. Hyatt has only playing-coach Ray Lizama, Nate Mateo, Gino Libuw, Yosh Gabaldon, and Francis Hartmen consistently showing up for the games in the playoffs.

Meanwhile, Game 1 of the finals is set for Dec. 30 with Department of Community and Cultural Affairs having a twice-to-beat advantage against the team that will get the last championship ticket.

CALIKANO

From Page 28

the first three innings and survived X-Terminators' rally in the last four innings to claim their first victory in three games. Advance remained winless after three matches.

X-Terminators scored only four runs in the first three innings against Falcons' 20 to face a daunting task in the last four innings. The Falcons played their best game at the bottom of the third, scoring nine runs on Dimas Omar Jr. and Nunu Kapileo's back-to-back homers.

The eventual winners then posted only one run in the last three innings, giving Advance an opportunity to mount a comeback. The X-Terminators had a seven-run top of the fourth then added one more in the fifth inning before being shutout in the sixth. Advance also shut out the Falcons in the fifth and sixth inning to cut the lead to single digit, 12-21.

Centerfielder John Acosta led off for Advance at the top of the seventh and homered, and the X-Terminators tallied six more runs with only one out to move within two, 19-21. However, the Falcons made two defensive stops to halt Advance's rally and preserve the win.

Centerfielder Mario Salas caught Rudy Sablan Jr.'s flyball, while second baseman Darren Pua picked up a grounder from Manny Cabrera and threw to first baseman Omar for the third out.

Omar only went 2-for-4 for the Falcons, but logged three RBIs. Kapileo and Juan Tenorio made two RBIs apiece on 3-for-4 and 3-for-4 performance at bat, respectively.

Acosta and Bob Castro led Advance's losing cause, nailing three RBIs apiece and hitting perfect at the plate, as they both went 3-for-3.

SaiPal 15, Fuegu 5

SaiPal streaked to its third straight win in as many matches after thumping Fuegu, 15-5.

The victory put SaiPal in a tie for first place wit Natibu and Island Rebels, while the loss further dragged Fuegu at the bottom of the team standings with its 1-3 slate.

Leftfielder Lefty Shiro and relief pitcher Gloyd Martin had one homer apiece in SaiPal's easy win and notched three and two RBIs, respectively.

SaiPal scored in five of the sixth-inning match, while Fuegu only reached home plate in the first and fourth inning to absorb its third loss. Fuegu had a miserable night at bat, going only 7-for-26 for a batting average of .269 against SaiPal's more decent clip of 14-for-37 (.378).

Meanwhile, the third game of the night between Red Eye and Blazers was rescheduled. The league will continue with its games tonight, while there will be no matches on Christmas Day and make-up games are scheduled for this Saturday.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	21	5	.808	_
Toronto	13	17	.433	10
New York	10	17	.370	11 1/2
Philadelphia	7	20	.259	14 1/2
New Jersey	2	26	.071	20

Southeast Division

Orlando	21	7	.750	_
Atlanta	19	7	.731	1
Miami	13	12	.520	6 1/2
Charlotte	10	16	.385	10
Washington	8	17	.320	11 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	21	8	.724	_
Milwaukee	12	14	.462	7 1/2
Detroit	11	16	.407	9
Chicago	10	16	.385	9 1/2
Indiana	9	17	.346	10 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	20	8	.714	_
San Antonio	15	10	.600	3 1/2
Houston	16	11	.593	3 1/2
New Orleans	12	14	.462	7
Memphis	12	15	.444	7 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	19	9	.679	_
Portland	17	12	.586	2 1/2
Utah	16	12	.571	3
Oklahoma City	13	13	.500	5
Minnesota	5	23	.179	14

Pacific Division

L.A. Lakers	22	4	.846	_
Phoenix	18	10	.643	5
Sacramento	13	14	.481	9 1/2
L.A. Clippers	12	15	.444	10 1/2
Golden State	7	19	.269	15

Yesterday's Games

Milwaukee 84, Indiana 81
Orlando 104, Utah 99
Sacramento 102, Chicago 98
San Antonio 103, L.A. Clippers 87
Cleveland 109, Phoenix 91

NBA LEADERS

Scoring

	G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
Anthony, DEN	28	292	247	855	30.5
Bryant, LAL	26	281	163	750	28.8
James, CLE	29	287	209	831	28.7
Durant, OKC	26	237	200	707	27.2
Wade, MIA	25	226	193	666	26.6
Nowitzki, DAL	27	251	183	705	26.1
Ellis, GOL	26	252	122	641	24.7
Bosh, TOR	30	246	216	714	23.8
Roy, POR	29	226	151	643	22.2
Arenas, WAS	25	189	126	551	22.0
Johnson, ATL	26	218	87	560	21.5
Gay, MEM	26	204	111	539	20.7
Jennings, MIL	26	193	84	524	20.2
Evans, SAC	26	192	126	523	20.1
Boozer, UTA	28	222	109	553	19.8
Stoudemire, PHX	28	210	133	553	19.8
Duncan, SAN	23	183	88	454	19.7
Stuckey, DET	27	195	136	532	19.7
Williams, UTA	26	187	109	512	19.7
Iguodala, PHL	27	185	122	530	19.6

FG Percentage

	FG	FGA	PCT
Perkins, BOS	125	194	.644
Howard, ORL	161	255	.631
Gasol, MEM	147	239	.615
Millsap, UTA	126	214	.589
Bynum, LAL	155	267	.581
Horford, ATL	145	250	.580
Hilario, DEN	144	249	.578
Landry, HOU	154	270	.570
Garnett, BOS	165	293	.563
Lee, NYK	198	352	.563

Rebounds

	G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Howard, ORL	28	106	255	361	12.9
Wallace, CHA	25	57	245	302	12.1
Noah, CHI	26	107	202	309	11.9
Camby, LAC	27	81	228	309	11.4
Bosh, TOR	30	102	232	334	11.1
Boozer, UTA	28	57	244	301	10.8
Randolph, MEM	27	124	166	290	10.7
Haywood, WAS	25	109	159	268	10.7
Duncan, SAN	23	72	169	241	10.5
Lee, NYK	27	62	215	277	10.3

Assists

	G	AST	AVG
Nash, PHX	28	318	11.4
Paul, NOR	18	200	11.1
Williams, UTA	26	266	10.2
Rondo, BOS	26	252	9.7
Kidd, DAL	28	259	9.3
James, CLE	29	225	7.8
B. Davis, LAC	27	202	7.5
Arenas, WAS	25	174	7.0
Westbrook, OKC	26	172	6.6
Duhon, NYK	27	173	6.4

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	365	244
Miami	7	7	0	.500	316	333
N.Y. Jets	7	7	0	.500	282	221
Buffalo	5	9	0	.357	225	288

South

x-Indianapolis	14	0	0	1.000	394	248
Jacksonville	7	7	0	.500	266	322
Tennessee	7	7	0	.500	320	347
Houston	7	7	0	.500	327	286

North

Cincinnati	9	5	0	.643	288	244
Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	350	225
Pittsburgh	7	7	0	.500	315	280
Cleveland	3	11	0	.214	199	349

West

x-San Diego	11	3	0	.786	389	283
Denver	8	6	0	.571	275	250
Oakland	5	9	0	.357	175	335
Kansas City	3	11	0	.214	240	383

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

y-Philadelphia	10	4	0	.714	399	286
Dallas	9	5	0	.643	320	250
N.Y. Giants	8	6	0	.571	386	342
Washington	4	10	0	.286	246	296

South

x-New Orleans	13	1	0	.929	483	298
Atlanta	7	7	0	.500	312	312
Carolina	6	8	0	.429	251	289
Tampa Bay	2	12	0	.143	214	363

North

x-Minnesota	11	3	0	.786	396	269
Green Bay	9	5	0	.643	380	280
Chicago	5	9	0	.357	254	322
Detroit	2	12	0	.143	233	437

West

x-Arizona	9	5	0	.643	337	282
San Francisco	6	8	0	.429	282	269
Seattle	5	9	0	.357	257	325
St. Louis	1	13	0	.071	159	377

x-clinched division
y-clinched playoff spot

Yesterday's Game

N.Y. Giants 45, Washington 12

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

LOCAL SCORES

UBA STANDINGS

Ol'Aces	4	0
Advance	3	0
Prospect	2	2
Diamond	2	1
Noni Saipan	1	2
Cholos	1	2
Hoopaholics	1	3
Trinity	0	4

BUDWEISER SOFTBALL STANDINGS

Natibu	3	0
Island Rebels	3	0
SaiPal	3	0
Chura	2	1
Man Amigos	2	1
Ur Balls	2	1
San Roque	2	1
6-Pack	2	1
Red Eye	2	1
Blazers	1	1
Hitz	1	1
Go For Broke	1	2
Freedom Air Flyers	1	2
Ramblers	1	2
Team Familia	1	2
Lancheros	1	2
Berdax	1	2
Calikano-Falcons	1	2
Team Fuegu	1	3
X-Terminators	0	3
G-Ballers	0	3

Trench Wars 11: Redemption

PHOTOS By ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Guam's Dillian Pablo tries to pin down Saipan's Jay "Taby" Muna during their 130-lb bout in Trench Wars 11:Redemption held Friday at the Royal Taga Hall of the Saipan World Resort.

Trench Tech's Tetsuji Kato pins down Russia's Ilya Zelik during one of the three main event bouts of the night.

Giovanni "Palaxi" Sablan connects on a kick on Wyneu "1 Time" Bamba's stomach.

Cornerman and Predator fighter Charles Aiken, left, gives instruction to Jay "Taby" Muna before his duel against Dillian Pablo.

A bloodied Bashir Jamlihanov takes a breather before the start of the second round of his bout against Charleston "Predator" Aiken.

Marianas Elite's Lionel "The Helion" Borja makes a rear-naked choke on "Big" Ron Chisato.

Guam's Josh Alvarez misses a kick against Saipan's Derick "El Peligro" Rangamar.

Saipan's Jason "Rush Tarkong, left, eludes a blow from Guam's Gil "The Guamaniac" Meno.

Iliev Ismail shows his fighting stance against Guam's Hosea "Killa B" Ware.

Jeff "Thunder" Cloud, right, uses a triangle choke to neutralize Rob "Pitbull" Palacios during their 190-lb. clash.

Kings storm back from 35 down to beat Bulls

Tyreke Evans and the Sacramento Kings pulled off an incredible comeback, rallying from 35 points down in the second half to stun the Chicago Bulls 102-98 on Monday night.

24

Saipan Tribune
Sports

Giants stay in playoff hunt, beat Redskins

Playing for their playoff lives, Eli Manning and the New York Giants were efficient, focused and dominant.

25

Sixers, G-Stars dispute Rotary title

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

The San Antonio Sixers and G-Stars will go for all the marbles today, as they duel in the one-game finals of the 2009 Saipan Rotary Club Youth Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

The Sixers and G-Stars arranged their title tiff after prevailing in separate semifinal matches on Monday. The G-Stars thwarted 670 Rollers in the first playoff match, 57-50, while the Sixers survived the Chalan Kanoa Saints in the second semis game, 68-66.

It was a heartbreaking loss for the Saints, who were three free throws away from advancing to the finals.

The Saints had the chance to steal the win after trailing by as much as 14 points in the second half, (52-38), when Zack Tudela drew a foul from Nathan Flores while pulling up for a shot from downtown. Tudela stepped up to the foul line for three free throws with the Sixers ahead by only a deuce, 68-66, in the last 10.1 seconds of the game, but missed all his charities.

Ian Benavente controlled the rebound and was fouled and the Sixers they gave up another foul after an inbound play to stop the clock, which read at 3.8 seconds. In the Sixers' last inbound play, Joe Ada received the pass and cleverly threw the ball away from the Saints' goal and there was a scramble for the loose

See SIXERS on Page 26

The Sixers' Joe Ada, left, goes up for a layup against two Saints defendents during their semis game in the Rotary caging on Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Four in a row for Ol'Aces

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

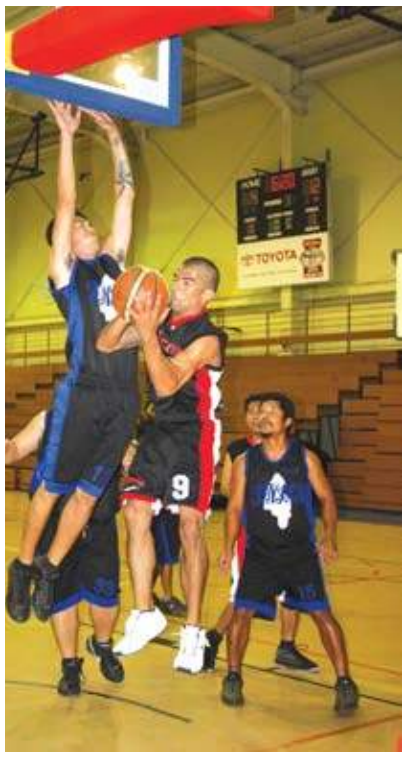
Ol'Aces notched their fourth straight win after hammering Prospects, 91-77, in the second game in the Inaugural 2009 UBA/Miller Lite Men's Basketball League on Monday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

A 4-0 start in the eight-team league put Ol'Aces in solo lead, a win ahead of Advance X-Terminators. Prospects absorbed its second straight defeat after prevailing in its first two games.

The Ol'Aces-Prospects tiff was a

See FOUR on Page 26

ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Ol'Aces' Tyrone Omar pulls up for a shot against Prospects defenders during their game in the UBA caging on Monday at the Garapan Basketball Court.



Docomo, Hyatt collide in do-or-die game

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

NTT Docomo and Hyatt Regency Saipan will meet in a do-or-die encounter tonight at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium for a semifinals seat in the 2009 IT&E Inter-Government/Business Basketball League.

The winner of the make-or-break game will face defending champion IT&E on Dec. 28 for the second and last finals ticket.

Docomo's Cuki Alvarez, right, goes up against the umbrella defense of Tinian's Ringo Reyes during their playoff game in the government/business caging on Monday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

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Docomo advanced to the playoff game against Hyatt after beating Tinian on Monday. Final scores of the Docomo-Tinian tiff were unavailable, as organizers failed to release the score sheets as of press time.

Docomo team captain James Lee recalled they won by double digits after climbing back from an 18-point deficit in the first period. Tinian started on fire, as it drilled three early triples and capitalized on a lethargic Docomo squad in the opening canto.

However, Tinian, which played with only six players, ran out of gas in the second half when it was Docomo's turn to pick up the pace of the game.

After surviving Tinian, Lee is hoping to have enough players for their important game against Hyatt. Lee said several of their key players will be playing

See DOCOMO on Page 26

Calikano-Falcons gain first victory

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Calikano-Falcons broke into the win column in Chamolinian Softball Association's 2009 Budweiser Slow-pitch Softball League after outlasting Advance X-Terminators, 21-19, on Monday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

Calikano-Falcons played strong in

See CALIKANO on Page 26

Nunu Kapileo plays for Calikano-Falcons, which thwarted Advance X-Terminators, 21-19, during their game in the Chamolinian softball league on Monday at the Capital Hill Ballfield.

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